This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Great Commanders

EDITED BY JAMES GRANT WILSON

GENERAL TAYLOR

Digitized by Google

The Great Commander Series.

EDITED BY GENERAL JAMES GRANT WILSON.

Admiral Farragut.
By Captain A. T. MAHAN, U. S. N.

General Taylor.
By General O. O. HOWARD, U. S. A.

IN PREPARATION:

General Jackson.
By JAMES PARTON.

General Washington.
By General BRADLEY T. JOHNSON.

General Greene.
By Captain FRANCIS V. GREENE, U. S. A.

General Sherman.
By General MANNING F. FORCE.

General Grant.
By General JAMES GRANT WILSON.

General J. E. Johnston.
By ROBERT M. HUGHES, of Virginia.

General Scott.
By General MARCUS J. WRIGHT.

Admiral Porter.
By JAMES R. SOLEY, Assist. Sec. of the Navy.

General Lee.
By General FITZHUGH LEE.

General Thomas.
By HENRY COPPEE, LL. D.

General Hancock.
By General FRANCIS A. WALKER.

General Sheridan.
By General HENRY E. DAVIES.

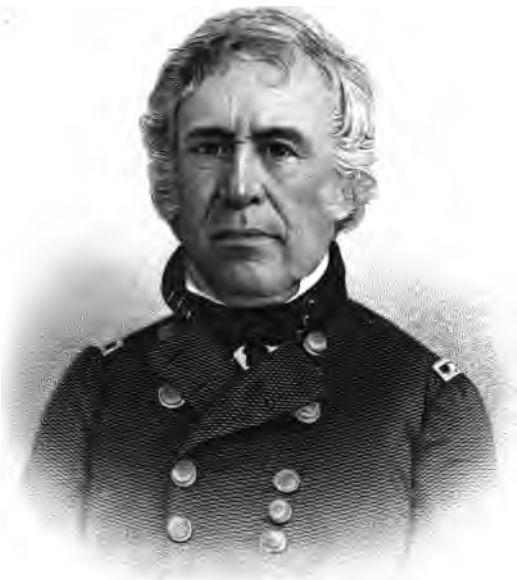
New York: D. APPLETON & Co., 1, 3, & 5 Bond St.

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L

Digitized by Google



H.B. Hall Sc.

Zachary Taylor

D. Appleton & Co.

Digitized by Google

OMMANDERS

★ ★ ★ ★

AL TAYLOR

HOWARD

U. S. Army

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GREAT COMMANDERS

★ ★ ★ ★

GENERAL TAYLOR

BY

OLIVER OTIS HOWARD

MAJOR-GENERAL U. S. ARMY

WITH PORTRAIT AND MAPS

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1892

L 6

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
868415 A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1936 L

COPYRIGHT, 1892,
BY D. APPLETON AND COMPANY.

All rights reserved.

ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED
AT THE APPLETON PRESS, U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

ERRATA.

Page 113, line 3, for *April* read *May*.
" 115, " 2, for *April* read *May*.
" 115, " 6 from bottom, for *April* read *May*.
" 273, " 8, for *laid* read *lay*.
" 370, " 17 from bottom, for *Wetherspoon* read *Wotherspoon*.

Index, for *Wetherspoon* read *Wotherspoon*.

Map facing page 173, explanation, for *2. The enemy's mortar battery* read *2. The mortar battery*.

unteer—His longings for a regular commission . . 10

CHAPTER III.

James Madison's influence—Jefferson's appointment of Taylor to a first lieutenancy—First duty at New Orleans—Leave and sickness—Military study—His marriage—Promoted to the captaincy of the Seventh Infantry—General William H. Harrison's operations in Northwest Territory—Tecumseh and his brother—Captain Taylor's participa-

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Explanatory remarks at the threshold of Zachary Taylor's biography—Why his life may very properly be reviewed—The development of his career compared with that of Lincoln and Grant—His daughter's testimony to intrinsic worth—How he kept back United States aggression against Mexico—How he thwarted the forerunners of secession—Some brief testimonies and sketches recently gathered 1

CHAPTER II.

A brief family history—Colonel Richard, the father of Zachary Taylor—A Revolutionary officer—The mother, Mary Strother Taylor—Zachary Taylor's birth—An emigration—The uncle, Hancock Taylor—President Washington's remembrance of Colonel Richard Taylor—Elisha Ayres, the teacher—Colonel Richard Taylor's death—Zachary's childhood—Influence of his mother—The environments—The farm-drill—Aaron Burr's scheme—The young volunteer—His longings for a regular commission . . . 16

CHAPTER III.

James Madison's influence—Jefferson's appointment of Taylor to a first lieutenancy—First duty at New Orleans—Leave and sickness—Military study—His marriage—Promoted to the captaincy of the Seventh Infantry—General William H. Harrison's operations in Northwest Territory—Tecumseh and his brother—Captain Taylor's participa-

Digitized by Google

PAGE

tion in the campaign—Tippecanoe—The War of 1812—The right of search claimed, and how instanced—A blockade—Taylor's patriotic feeling—Declaration of war—Approved June 18, 1812—Canadian hostile expedition—Major Muir and Chief Tecumseh—General Harrison's successful move—Fort Harrison, on the Wabash, commanded by Captain Zachary Taylor—The small garrison—Illness—The attack of Indians, and how repulsed—Captain Taylor's own report—The road from Fort Harrison to Vincennes—The ten days of hope deferred—At last relief came—Captain Taylor's two communications to General Hopkins—General Hopkins's strong approval of Captain Taylor—The first brevet—General Hopkins advances—Major Taylor helps in the expedition—General Harrison commends him 25

CHAPTER IV.

An increase of regiments—And then promotion to a majority—His Rock River expedition—A sudden reduction to ten thousand men—Major Zachary Taylor declines to go back to a captaincy—Again in civil life—How General William H. Harrison and other friends sought his return to service—Next recommissioned a major of the Third Infantry—A furlough spent in Kentucky—Again a promotion—A lieutenant-colonel, Fourth Infantry—On a great variety of duties, as recruiting, boards for constructions, for reorganizing the army, for uniform, etc.—Stationed at Baton Rouge—Then at Fort Crawford, Northwest Territory—Indian Superintendent for a time by detail—Incidents in the Black Hawk War—Taylor's superb regulars—General Atkinson's praises 41

CHAPTER V.

The Florida troubles—Osceola—The Creeks—The Seminoles—The threatened Western removals—The black flag and massacres—Major Dade and his detachment—The Everglades of Florida—Old Generals Clinch, Jessup, and others—President Van Buren's message—Taylor's

Digitized by Google

PAGE

fac-simile letter written at Fort Crawford, July 14, 1837 —Taylor's careless dress—A young officer's mistake and chagrin—General Jessup defeated and wounded at Jupiter Inlet, Fla.—General Taylor's arrival at Tampa Bay and Fort Gardner—His campaign of the Kissimmee and successful battle of Okeechobee—His dispatches—His excellent dispositions of troops and districts—He seeks to be relieved—Is sent to Fort Jessup, Louisiana . . 48

CHAPTER VI.

General Taylor at Baton Rouge in 1840—The plantation—The beautiful home near the barracks—How Mrs. Holloway pictures the cottage—Mrs. Taylor's comfort and joy—How the civil experience ended—Sent to the Louisiana and Texas frontier—How the Mexican War began —Taylor's position—Taylor's letter of July 20th, New Orleans, 1845—Sets out for St. Joseph's Island—Moved to Corpus Christi—The forces—Twiggs's Cavalry—A pleasant camp 76

CHAPTER VII.

Holding the Nueces—Rio Grande claimed—Testimony of a distinguished friend still living—Taylor's judiciousness—Insists on orders—The move to Point Isabel—General Taylor by land—Major Monroe by sea—Mexican Generals, Mejia and Ampudia—What they did—Taylor's correspondence with the enemy—His first discouragements and losses—How operations were commenced in the Rio Grande valley—The blockade of the Rio Grande (or Rio del Norte)—Arista's coming—His aims—His strong protest—General Taylor's reply 90

CHAPTER VIII.

The defense of Fort Brown—Its garrison—The move to Point Isabel—Arista's dispositions—He takes the offensive—Taylor's work at Point Isabel—His march—His meeting Arista in battle—The lines of both—The differ-

Digitized by Google

PAGE

ent attacks, and how met—The end of the day—The council—The results of the day 104

CHAPTER IX.

Resaca de la Palma—The appearance of the region—Taylor's anxiety for Fort Brown—Details of the decisive battle—Artillery resistance—May's celebrated charge—General Taylor's story of the conflict—The after-battle—His tenderness toward the wounded—A brief summary—Texas secured to the Rio Grande 115

CHAPTER X.

Taylor's endowment—Reports—Exchange of prisoners—The *rancheros* again—Important visit to Point Isabel—Ringgold's and Blake's death—After-battle shadows—Words to La Vega—The taking of Barita and Lower Rio Grande—Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson's expedition—Bridges and launches—Arista's *ruse de guerre*—Crossing the Rio Grande in force—The drowning of Lieutenant George Stevens—Arista in full retreat—Arista's report—Contrast of Arista and Taylor, their equipoise and manners—Matamoros in 1892—Schools and public improvements evincing progress 125

CHAPTER XI.

Three months' rest of Taylor's army—Leaders of the Whig party looking to Taylor as candidate for the presidency—Extracts from letters relating thereto—Taylor brevetted Major-General—Given full rank a little later—Taylor's plans coincident with Scott's—Movement on Camargo begun—Taylor's popularity with his soldiers—His self-denial—Care for the sick on the steamer 139

CHAPTER XII.

The storming and capture of Monterey—The city and environments—Arista relieved, Monterey defended by Ampudia—His inspiring address—Taylor's troops—Prepara-

Digitized by Google

PAGE

tions for battle—Rain and severe cold of the first night—Battle at daybreak—Cheers drew a heavy fire—Quickness of Worth's batteries astonishes the Mexicans—Worth attempts the mountain forts—Federacion captured, its guns turned on Saldado—Mexican panic—Soldado captured—Effort of Mexican commander to charge, driven back—Duncan and Mackall's batteries 149

CHAPTER XIII.

The storming and capture of Monterey (continued)—Story of the north front—Baltimore and Washington volunteers break—Regulars worked forward under great resistance into Monterey—Brilliant work of Captain Backus—Lieutenant-Colonel Garland withdraws his men—Terrible encounter of the Fourth Infantry—General Quitman surprises his foes, who abandon their wounded and flee—General Butler and Colonel Mitchell wounded—Lieutenant-Colonel Garland again—The strong diversion accomplished—The night rest at El Bosque—Prolonged through the 22d of September — Lieutenant-Colonel Child's night march and morning assault—The redoubt upon Loma de Independencia captured at dawn—Bishop's Palace taken—A combined Mexican effort—How met by General Worth and defeated—General Morales's proposal miscarried—General Taylor and Jefferson Davis—Ampudia's letter—Taylor's reply—Preliminaries to the armistice and capitulation—The terms agreed upon . . . 164

CHAPTER XIV.

Terms of the capitulation objected to—Causes of Taylor's leniency—Comments of American members of the Joint Commission—Bravery of both sides—Taylor's force too small for complete investment—Too small for effective pursuit—Ammunition and supplies gained, etc.—Taylor's own defense—Letters to the Secretary of War—Sure escape of the bulk of Ampudia's force except for the capitulation—Loss of life—Explosions of magazines—Damage to the city—The capitulation paralyzed the enemy for a

Digitized by Google

PAGE

CHAPTER XXII.

Receptions and public dinners—The inaugural ball—The address as published—Clear enunciation of principles—The Cabinet—The household at the White House—Mrs. Bettie Bliss at a public gathering—Some great names associated with Zachary Taylor 314

CHAPTER XXIII.

The state of the country after Taylor's election—The testimony of Dr. Upham, a living witness—Northern sentiments—Southern fears and feeling—Conservative minds illustrated—President Taylor the "steadying center"—Hon. Herman White, of Cohoes, New York, shows the angry element in Congress—A Northern man and a Southern of sympathetic Union views meet—A "Fire-eater" and Edward Stanley—The last speech of John C. Calhoun—Pierce and Calhoun—How General Taylor met disloyal threats—The six Southern friends—Confidence in Daniel Webster and what he accomplished—Georgia's vote—How Union men turned away—The faults of Pierce's administration—Taylor loved the flag . 348

CHAPTER XXIV.

Concluding remarks—White House routine—Mrs. Bliss at the White House—Some gentle criticisms—The Fourth of July—The laying of the corner-stone of Washington's monument—President Taylor's part—The heat of the day—The imprudences of the President—His sudden sickness—The general alarm—The reports *pro* and *con*—The last scene, and the last words of President Taylor—Millard Fillmore, the Vice-President—What he did—The funeral ceremonies—The testimony of Thomas H. Benton, Daniel Webster, and other public men—All honor to the American soldier! 366

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

FACING PAGE

Portrait of Zachary Taylor . . . . *Frontispiece*

Part of Texas and Northern Mexico, showing the Field of Taylor's Operations 90

Plan of the Battle of Palo Alto 116

Vicinity of Monterey and Saltillo 149

Plan of the City of Monterey, State of New Leon, September, 1846 173

Plan of the Battle of Buena Vista 241

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GENERAL TAYLOR.

CHAPTER I.

Explanatory remarks at the threshold of Zachary Taylor's biography—Why his life may very properly be reviewed—The development of his career compared with that of Lincoln and Grant—His daughter's testimony to intrinsic worth—How he kept back United States aggression against Mexico—How he thwarted the forerunners of secession—Some brief testimonies and sketches recently gathered.

To make a thorough study of one who has long had a prominent place among historic characters, there ought to be abundant material derived from independent sources. The unconscious testimony of intimates who have lived near him or written concerning him often lets you see the *bona-fide* individual. A well-preserved likeness or portrait may exhibit the size and shape of his head, the strength of his chin, the firmness of his closed lips, or the closely knit frame. His letters or other writings will contain not only the style of the composer, but to the persistent, appreciative searcher, the very spirit of the man may be discovered and absorbed from them. And, of course, while small things indicate phases of character, his choicest achievements, if there be a fair record of them, must contain the best and fullest revelations of a noble soul.

Digitized by Google

But to make an appropriate and acceptable exhibit of your wares is something quite different from the simple possession of them. Such exhibit demands a knowledge of the tastes and desires of the people who are to come to see them. And, certainly, whenever any conscientious biographer, who has studied well and pondered long the thoughts and acts of his subject, puts forth the results, it always is problematical whether he can or can not be able to bring other minds into close enough fellowship to behold them. It is therefore with no little trepidation that the unknown reading public is herein invited to a review of the life of Zachary Taylor.

This subject of our sketch, as an army officer, had served in peace and in active campaign before the Mexican War sufficiently long to gain a practical and extended military knowledge and personal discipline. In the War of 1812, as we shall see, he made his brilliant points and gained a substantial reward by receiving a brevet commission above his grade—among the first of that kind given to any officers in our country. After this war, stationed at different points throughout our extended Western frontier, like other officers associated with him, he did his incumbent duty, certainly without serious official criticism; but as yet there was nothing in the wake of his genius or special superiority to be seized upon. When, however, imbecility and weakness had been exhibited by one commander after another in the management of a Southern department, the minds of our administrators were at last turned toward Taylor, who had in his favor a long and sturdy record. Slowly promoted from grade to grade, he had now become a middle-aged colonel.

Digitized by Google

As an untried experiment in Florida affairs, a sort of forlorn hope, he was communicated with and ordered to the new field. His marches, battles, and partial successes in this difficult area of operations are unique and of intrinsic interest. At last he made an active campaign, without hesitancy, fought a bloody battle, and thereby gained considerable public notice, and was raised to the honorary rank of the next grade, so that after this campaign he was denominated *General* Taylor.

In the days when information was so long in going from place to place, even his Indian campaign and gallant conduct did not really bring him very much before the general public. A few people simply knew that there was an officer of the army by the name of Taylor, from Kentucky, who, in several emergencies like those referred to, had done his duty nobly, for which he had received a major's commission, and afterward one of brigadier-general. Probably few persons beyond the army circles and some members of Congress knew even as much as that concerning Zachary Taylor.

When the Mexican War commenced, his sterling qualities were recalled and published, and brought him quickly into demand. His aptitude for war that had steadily developed in remote places, like that of Von Moltke, began to manifest itself—e. g., in Texas, at Corpus Christi—and was more apparent as soon as he reached the Rio Grande. The battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, and Buena Vista surprised his countrymen, and much more so his enemies. Over the Mexican forces, always exceeding his own in numbers, and well commanded, he uniformly gained a victory. The last battle, Buena

Digitized by Google

Vista, which with the others will hereafter be discussed in detail, was certainly phenomenal, for there had been taken from him, shortly before, nearly all his regular troops, and his volunteers were not only few in number, but many of them recruits unaccustomed to hostile shots; yet fearlessly he took a position with a view to the defending of a city outside and beyond the limits of that city; he met without hesitation a greatly superior force, commanded by one of the ablest generals of the age, and delivered such a successful battle against him that it put an end, for the war, to the enemy's efforts along that important line of operations.

If we trace the lives of Washington, of Lincoln, or of Grant, step by step, we see in each of them a time of unconscious preparation. There seemed to be at first little or no anticipation in their own minds of the great parts they were to play. Still, as we go back along their early pathways we find the process of molding and fitting very thoroughly done; and at the proper time—in fact, in the fullness of time—they are each of them launched out before the whole world, like ships well constructed and well equipped, as superior men, equal to the greatest, equal to the leading generals of the century, yes, markedly superior to sundry great kings and princes who have been reared avowedly for the conception, study, and accomplishment of high things. As with these three, so with Zachary Taylor. His early education was very limited. His work in early manhood was for the most part out of sight and outside the pale of ordinary society; on a Kentucky farm; at small frontier posts; or campaigning far off from civilized centers against a few bands of savages.

Digitized by Google

It is now late in life. Nothing especially brilliant during its brief term is expected of him by his countrymen. But suddenly this man is raised up to be the most noticeable figure of the land; and then soon, like Lincoln and Grant, he comes to sit in the presidential chair, holding as high an office as the world can offer. It is surely the Lord's doings, and it is marvelous in our eyes. One beholder said of Taylor: "He was upright, it is admitted. Yet in all the biographies, in all the speeches made concerning him, his enlargement of soul has not been dwelt upon; nobody has indicated that he had attained even a degree in spirituality, as becometh a man of God!" A friend of Zachary Taylor's, hearing this remark, answered: "That may be so, but an honest man is the noblest work of God. He was, like Cyrus of old, an exponent of God's handiwork; he was an instrument in God's hands for executing his purposes."

His daughter's picture gives undoubtedly the true version; she says: "My father's nature was most kindly and affectionate; and, while not a professor of religion, he had the greatest respect for true piety, and was honorable, straightforward, and conscientious in all his dealings. He was a constant reader of the Bible and practiced all its precepts, acknowledging his responsibility to God. There never was a more tender and devoted father; and his children had the highest respect, love, and confidence in him. His letters, written while I was separated from him, were models of good counsel, and I regret that I have not been able to preserve them."

Such was Zachary Taylor. A man of noble parts, and one, without doubt, chosen from among his countrymen, like Moses and Joshua and David, by the

Digitized by Google

great Disposer of human events, to work out for other hands to record a most important part of human history—that which lies in the formative period of a great liberty-bearing nation. It is a fine model. And so there falls to the writer a singularly pleasant task—viz.: step by step to review his unique biography and endeavor to present somewhat in detail the achievements of his career.

It may be well to notice in these primary statements a few things which, if there were nothing else, will justify this biography in an historic point of view. It will be seen, in the course of the story—

First. How Taylor, by his carefulness in a great crisis, preserved the honor of the nation. For the sake of personal ambition and the glory of his arms he did not hasten into the great conflict with Mexico, not advancing till constrained by imperative orders to do so, and even under such orders his army did not strike the first blow. This was the enemy's doing.

Second. How again as President, when the sentiments and sympathies of his section of the United States had become already ripe for secession or revolution, he carefully kept himself informed, and prepared his forces against a sudden outbreak, and, to the chagrin of extremists, so suppressed the budding rebellion that it had to be postponed for more than ten years. How providential that we had such a President in the very nick of time! For then the national elements were charged with opposite currents, and no national party, had he but favored secession, would have been ready or able to save the Union from a disastrous wreck. Then all honor, under God, to Zachary Taylor, clad as he was from youth

Digitized by Google

to age in national armor, for the unflinching and indispensable part he bore in preserving the nation.

During a recent visit to Louisville, Ky., Baton Rouge, La., Point Isabel, Texas, and to the several battle-fields connected with the name and fame of General Taylor in Texas and Mexico, it was the writer's privilege to meet several aged men who knew the subject of his sketch at the time of Taylor's most active days, nearly half a century ago. The first remembrance uniformly mentioned is his gentleness of manner and kindness of heart. One veteran, a political friend, at Baton Rouge, said: "Oh, yes, I knew the old man well. He was a kind, courteous man, but a little close with his money when he lived here and carried on his plantation up the river."

Ques. "Did he pay his debts?"

Ans. "Why, certainly; he was an honest man, but never lavish; always economical."

The venerable Dr. Charles Macmanus, living at Matamoras, who at twenty-two years of age was a surgeon in Taylor's army and who knew him well, when asked by General Howard how Taylor looked, said: "Ah, general, he looked like you; he was as old as you are now, with iron-gray hair and full beard. He was very solicitous for the health of his men. I was called from Louisiana because, though young, I had already had experience with the cholera which was then threatening his troops in the Rio Grande valley."

A veteran physician by the name of Smith, at Saltillo, who came there just after the Mexican War, talked of Taylor's operations as evincing genius, firmness, and perseverance; but his dignity and kindness of manner were especially emphasized. At the

Digitized by Google

City of Mexico a Mr. Carr, a strongly built, gray-bearded veteran, who was an army trader approaching Monterey in company with a train under military escort just after the battle of Buena Vista, and who lost all he had in the train, had many reminiscences of his interviews with General Taylor. The strong impression made by the general upon him, he being at the time a very young man, has never been effaced. The officer in charge of the train and escort, on hearing of the approach of hostile cavalry, after consulting with all concerned, concluded to disobey General Taylor's orders that had been sent and acknowledged—viz.: "to turn back and go into park." He, on the contrary, thought it safer to push straight on night and day and try to reach Monterey. The officer was overwhelmingly attacked and lost his train, and so General Taylor was vexed beyond measure. Mr. Carr, who with a few others escaped capture, made his way after a time to General Taylor's camp. The general at once sent for the young man to make inquiries. To use Mr. Carr's own language: "General Taylor, on my coming to his tent, was so angry that he could not finish a sentence. You know," he said, "he stammered some when excited. '*Why did that officer disobey my orders?*' He was so excited and angry that he would not then hear my explanation, and so after a few monosyllables I went off. Next day he sent for me again, treated me most kindly, and, after he had heard all about the affair, thanked me. Two or three times after that he had me come and explain; and finally forgave the disobedient officer his offense."

Such an incident, remembered so long, is a revelation. Of course, Taylor was a man of like passions as

Digitized by Google

ourselves. The more points of observation we have from which to study him, the more he seems to resemble Grant and Thomas. He had Grant's firmness and generosity to subordinates, with Thomas's sturdiness, gentleness, not excluding a capacity for excitement in an emergency. We will be better able, however, by and by to make a fuller estimate of the character of the man. The childhood, the boyhood, and the young manhood of noble men are always as needful to completeness of portraiture as is the solidity of after-life; and they are especially helpful to the young who are thoughtful and aspiring.

The scenes of Zachary Taylor's childhood in Kentucky, not far from the Ohio, have not changed much since the early days. There are the same rolling prairies, the same open stretches, the same limpid streams, with cotton-wood trees now of immense size. A few of the log-houses of early settlers are still there attached as kitchens to large farm houses, and high fences divide up the old farm that in Zachary's young days had no such divisions to hinder his riding in straight lines, so making shorter distances than by present roads to the growing town. A country cemetery is formed by a rectangular stone wall, where we find a famous, handsome, granite monument surmounted by a rather diminutive figure of our hero. The natural size, not of the real man but of the statue, has grown small by too much elevation. The old evergreens in the northeast corner are large, umbrageous, and solemn. The ancient tomb, half buried, faced with stone blocks which have been moved out and in by the winter's frosts, with its low, closed door in the middle front, gives the visitor a feeling that he is within the precincts of a

Digitized by Google

distant past. This effect upon his thought is increased by the different members of the great Taylor family that he finds here buried near the same sacred corner. With difficulty he deciphers the old dates upon the little monuments and moss-covered headstones, which are themselves, like all things material and mortal, bending with years.

So here, a few short miles from the active, throbbing city of Louisville, the signs of youth and age, of the present and the past, meet, and, if we can read them aright, furnish us with object-lessons which enhance the value of the fleeting years and take fresh hold upon that which is beyond the natural vision. The people there buried, both men and women, were once tenants of good, humble homes. They were pioneers and patriots; and as we touch here and there the memorials of their deeds, we revere them. Their spirits in their appointed time went back to God who gave them. So every old tree, every old tomb, monument, or headstone, while it reminds us of a bit of history, yet speaks more distinctly of trees that can not wither, of dwelling places whose fitness and beauty pass human knowledge and description—but, with even more emphasis, of the tenants that can never, never lose their life and glory.

At Baton Rouge, the charming family cottage of Mrs. Taylor, from which she dispensed, during the great suspense and agonies of a grievous war, comfort and blessing to her humble neighbors, the absent soldiers' wives and children, has been torn down and carried away. But the grand old Mississippi flows there still, having encroached somewhat upon the door-yard in its unsparing greed; but it has diligently kept green the surrounding turf and well

Digitized by Google

watered the roots of the four China trees which once sheltered the inmates of a unique American home. These trees have a few old knots and dry limbs, but are still green and flourishing, and give shelter to the flocks of happy birds that even in winter emphasize the attractions of such a Southern site. No wonder Mrs. Taylor loved this choice spot of earth with its home comforts more than a palace upon the banks of the Potomac.

As we stood and looked at the great portrait at the Baton Rouge capitol, an old resident told a strange story about it, to wit: "Why, sir, that is Zachary Taylor's head and body with another man's legs!"

"How so, my friend?"

"Oh, the old gentleman would not sit as a model. When he was little thinking of it the artist sketched his head and body; but, as the general declared that he could not afford the time for further operations, the poor artist was obliged to finish with another man."

Well, the result is fairly good. The face is not so firm and strong as that of other portraits, and he appears like a taller man than his actual height would perhaps warrant; yet it is a well-executed and well-preserved full-length picture, comparing favorably with its companion piece, that of the indomitable hero of New Orleans.

The writer has received from General C. L. Kilburn, who was a lieutenant with General Taylor in his Mexican campaign, an engraving of his general which, more than any other likeness that has been presented, reveals the strong points in his features which always affected those who came in daily contact with him.

Digitized by Google

Through the kindness of General Porfirio Diaz, the eminent and most respected president of the Republic of Mexico, who served his country at the age of eighteen during the Mexican War, have been obtained sketches of the uniform then used by the Mexican army. He enabled the writer to have access to every historic place, and demonstrated that now every iota of even sensitive feeling has passed away, and that respect, friendship, and wholesome emulation have been for some time the attitude of the citizens of the two republics. The Mexicans have constantly honored their own faithful soldiers, as they should—and we, too, honor them as we attempt to record the deeds of our own.

In the passion of the hour of conflict and for years afterward, stories are told and perpetuated which are partial and biased; but little by little that which is hurtful is eliminated, while the truth only, which is somehow a common final judgment, is abiding. The Mexicans, the actual people of to-day, are a kindly, happy people. They are particularly kind to one another in their family relations—fathers and mothers and grandparents especially so to the children, and children to one another. And such, when met with Christian courtesy, are quick to reciprocate good will—yes, even that of the stranger. And indeed the best of our citizens, with their capital and their learning and their varied abilities, are now particularly welcome; for under their present rulers there is a general awakening in the line of public education and public enterprise—an awakening in which the humblest citizen is made to participate. Long may the good will and friendship between the two republics continue.

Digitized by Google

What marvelous changes in our country since Zachary Taylor came on the stage of action! The battle-fields of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, where Wayne, Harrison, and Taylor marched far, fought hard, and won their first laurels against powerful tribes of Indians, are now scarcely known to the inhabitants of the region. Large thriving cities, such as Vincennes, Terre Haute, and Peoria, have so long existed and been so connected with each other, and with greater cities, as Louisville, Chicago, St. Louis, Columbus, and Cincinnati, that the actual history of their sites appears to our youth, who are obliged to master the facts of early days, like mysterious tales of the middle ages.

If Captain Zachary Taylor had been told by some inspired prophet that those vast stretches of Illinois —those almost limitless prairies, which it took him weeks to cross, and where there was no house or fence or inhabitant except the venturesome trapper and the roving Indian—would be completely occupied with villages, cities, and farms, and traversed and checked throughout their entire length and breadth with public railways and telegraph lines, before the close of the nineteenth century, he would have laughed at the revelator and accounted his story but a beautiful dream. We of to-day know the facts, and they hardly strike us, amid our abundance, with wonder. Yet, as gray-haired men pause for a few weeks from the intense activity of to-day's business and ride, as the writer has just done, in Pullman cars, from St. Louis to Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, they might call up the past decades, and not fail to honor in their hearts the sturdy pioneer patriots who opened up these immense avenues of wealth and hap-

Digitized by Google

piness to the nation and the world. We can not hesitate to reckon young Zachary Taylor among the most prominent, the most fearless, the most deserving of those heroes.

The Florida lands day by day are covered with sweet winter residences, superb hotels, and the choicest villages and cities. Railroads connect them and render them a practicable luxury to those who dwell in the colder parts of our domain. Fruits, like the orange, the lemon, the fig, and the banana, are filling up the intervening spaces, and the whole State is fast becoming a home of pure rest and refreshment to winter residents of refinement and culture. Even those luxuries have cost toil, suffering, and blood. Thousands of soldiers have marched through its swamps and laid down their lives that the beautiful land might have permanent peace and unstinted plenty. Among the boldest, the ablest, the most successful, was Colonel Zachary Taylor. Let those who cross the smooth and placid surface of the Okeechobee in a luxurious steamer call up the old battlefield of "Okeechobee," and honor the "Rough and Ready" American who took this Gennesaret from the bloody Philistines of later days but a few years ago!

And there is Texas, large enough for a kingdom, teeming with a prosperous, self-respecting, industrious, rising population. That it came to us at all and in perpetuity, the honor may be shared by great leaders. But I behold General Zachary Taylor, in 1845, 1846, and 1847, working with his might in Arkansas, on the Texas border at Fort Jesup, at Corpus Christi, at Point Isabel, and all along in the magnificent and fertile valley of the Rio Grande—he is at Matamoras, then at Camargo—a few weeks later

Digitized by Google

at Monterey, and then he clears the villages of the gigantic mountains of Sierra Madre. What results have come since then! Texas is free, is rich in land, and is now extending a generous welcome to mankind. Who more than Taylor secured the true boundaries of this extraordinary State? Who contributed more than he to the present possibilities of the country against which he was constrained to fight?

Though Taylor and Scott could not have dreamed of such possibilities, they shall receive the writer's salute of honor for having projected, secured, and transmitted them. Let us now return to the more immediate work of our biography.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

A brief family history—Colonel Richard, the father of Zachary Taylor—A Revolutionary officer—The mother, Mary Strother Taylor—Zachary Taylor's birth—An emigration—The uncle, Hancock Taylor—President Washington's remembrance of Colonel Richard Taylor—Elisha Ayres, the teacher—Colonel Richard Taylor's death—Zachary's childhood—Influence of his mother—The environments—The farm-drill—Aaron Burr's scheme—The young volunteer—His longings for a regular commission.

THE sketch of nearly every American family begins with a migration; to wit, two brothers cross the Atlantic and settle, one in Massachusetts and the other in Maryland. Or, three brothers in Vermont leave the paternal roof in early manhood. One makes his abode in Illinois, a second in Iowa, and the third takes up a claim in western Oregon. So the children of Anglo-Saxons migrate and divide the family name. The Taylor family is no exception.

The English transference of the sixteenth century carried the name from the old country to Virginia. The first prominent scion of this family, which comes to us from the Revolutionary period, is *Richard Taylor*, a citizen-soldier of eastern Virginia, born March 22, 1744. Like a late descendant, who somehow wandered into the ranks of the Confederates during our civil war of 1861–'65, he was familiarly denominated "Dick Taylor." He acquired such

Digitized by Google

practical education as the schools and the home family could afford him. He exhibited, even in boyhood, a strong desire for adventure, and then pledged a few of his school-fellows to go with him to explore the Indian country and the as yet unknown wilds of the great West. And, indeed, young Dick Taylor was hardly of age when he himself, at least, made his projected journey through the western counties of Virginia, across Kentucky even as far as the Mississippi valley, and then southward, descending the great river to Natchez. From this hamlet, then but a trading post, he changed his course northward, and, as his biographer remarks, "without guide or companion, through pathless woods, over rivers and mountains, fearless alike of the seasons, of savages, or of any peril of his long and lonely way, he walked back to his father's house in Virginia."

As one might anticipate, Dick Taylor early took sides with the patriots of 1776. We soon find him a colonel and in command of a Virginia regiment. He was a trusted soldier of General Washington, and during the long Revolutionary struggle formed part of his field force. Colonel Richard Taylor was thirty-five years old before he married. And, as with most bachelors advancing in years, he was captivated by a very young lady. On August 20, 1779, he wedded the charming captor, Mary Strother, then but nineteen. As sons are more likely to possess and to exhibit the characteristics of their mothers than of their fathers, the writer regrets that he can find so little record concerning this good woman. It is certain that she came of excellent family, and there are not wanting abundant evidences of a patient, heroic fidelity to family duties as she found

Digitized by Google

them, and an untiring support to the rougher, energetic pioneer citizen and soldier husband whom she faithfully loved.

They first went to housekeeping on a Virginia plantation in Orange County. It is even now but a thinly settled country. Taking at the Potomac River the Orange and Alexandria Railroad train which passes through Manasses, the famous Bull Run battle-ground, and keeping on southward, you cross the Rappahannock. Ten miles from this crossing is Culpeper, and ten miles farther on is Orange Court-House, the county seat of Orange County. Here, in 1781, the first child of Colonel Richard and Mary S. Taylor was born. Here also came to them two other children—the third, Zachary, the subject of this sketch, first seeing the light November 24, 1784. Before this child was a year old, and when the eldest was but four—that is, during Zachary's first summer—the family began to make real the hopes that the worthy father had cherished ever since his much-talked-of romantic expedition to the Mississippi. They made the rough, hard journey from Orange County to the banks of the Ohio, and settled near what is now Louisville, Ky. Fortunately, Richard's brave brother, Hancock Taylor, the enterprising surveyor, whom subsequently the Indians killed while pressing forward his pioneer work, had preceded the little family. His warm welcome relieved the hardship of the change.

Hancock Taylor, as nearly as can be ascertained, himself occupied a farm all of which is now within the limits of the great city of Louisville. Richard took up his plantation a little above that of his brother, erecting his main house five or six miles in

Digitized by Google

a straight line from his brother's. The Bear-grass Creek drained the grounds of this large estate, or "farm," as Zachary called the tract occupied and cultivated under his father's supervision.

Allow me a few words more concerning this frontier sire before we pass on to dwell on the peculiar characteristics and work of his remarkable son. Though, by his frugality and enterprise, he succeeded in acquiring a choice property and making his growing family most comfortable, he did not succeed in keeping himself from public affairs. President Washington, remembering his distinguished services and suitable character, appointed him Collector of the Port of Louisville, for Louisiana was as yet a foreign country, and so this growing town on the Ohio naturally became, to the country beyond the Mississippi, a port of entry, and had a *bona-fide* custom-house.

"The young American's library" has these pregnant words regarding Richard Taylor: "Renowned for his desperate encounters with Indians, he was a prominent man in civil life, holding many offices in the State of his adoption, and serving in many of the national electoral colleges." So much for Richard Taylor's public life. His domestic record is meager, but pertinent and without blemish. He provided well for his large family, consisting of a wife and eight healthy children—five sons and three daughters.

After the emigration to Kentucky he was at first puzzled as to their proper education. At last he employed a private tutor from New England. For several years Elisha Ayres served him acceptably in that capacity. And as Mr. Ayres finally had something

Digitized by Google

like a New England school-house in his keeping and for his charge, it is inferred that Colonel Taylor had these educational privileges extended to the children of his neighbors, none of whom abode at that day very near to him or to each other. After a long and useful life, beloved by his family and highly esteemed by his neighbors, Colonel Taylor died in peace at his own homestead, at the age of eighty-two.

The preceding history gives glimpses of the inheritance of Zachary Taylor, Richard's son, a healthful American boy. From babyhood he was in the country on a large farm and in a sizable family. His father, as we have seen, was a solid man of much energy and worthy achievement. His mother was a woman of mark. She always, and often under the most unfavorable circumstances, gave to husband and children a cheerful and happy home. In the midst of personal exposure and untold danger, in Kentucky, she ever kept up her fortitude and courage. These characteristics indeed are not extraordinary, but when we discover a firm superstructure we love to inspect the foundation, and generally find it, as in this case, very good.

The surroundings of young Taylor in childhood were peculiar, probably too exciting, had he been of a nervous temperament; but for a sturdy, hardy lad like him, with a cool and self-possessed mother to encourage him, they were calculated to strengthen and develop the child into a self-possessed, sturdy American youth. Mr. Ayres's picture of the people of the neighborhood is suggestive: "They were often engaged in offensive or defensive skirmishes with the Indians." A number of those wild men were known to be in the woods not far distant from the school-

Digitized by Google

house, and on one occasion one of them was shot "wearing a British uniform."

Think of the mother after breakfast bidding her boy good-by and sending him off afoot or on his pony to the famous school so situated and so environed! Imagine her anxiety all day till his safe return to the paternal roof! Behold her watching the operation of a valiant neighbor who was teaching her boys how to trail Indians, and how to save themselves if attacked by more than one warrior at a time! Behold her kindling eye, half anxious, and yet thrilling with future hopes, as she listens to the well-known stories of the old war—stories many times told by her brave husband to Zachary and the rest, recitals always mingled with his Indian expeditions, Indian fights, long-continued perils, and final success. We need but few incidents to tell us how a strong lad would think and speak and act in the presence of such influences in his home, his neighborhood, and his school; how, as a matter of course, he went with his brothers and with other young companions on dangerous hunting expeditions; how he took wild rides through the woods and across the open prairies to the east and south of his home; how in the spring-time, while the water was still cold, he once swam the broad and swift Ohio.

Before the successful Indian campaign of General Anthony Wayne to the north of the Ohio River in 1794, when Zachary was ten years old, the inhabitants on both banks of the river were in constant alarm; the people, and especially the family doctor, always went from house to house well armed; and small encounters between the white men and savages were of almost daily occurrence. The story of

Digitized by Google

Wayne's victory gave the Taylors and their neighbors great satisfaction. After that, Kentucky, in fact, grew more peaceful and increased its inhabitants.

Colonel Taylor destined the older son, William, to the army, and in 1802 secured a commission for him, but his third child was to be a farmer. That meant to work with axe and fire and plow to clear up and extend the cultivated land. The youth had undoubtedly helpers at hand, but he himself worked at every variety of the farm work. What a wise thing it is to so bring up an intelligent boy on a farm! His pliant hands themselves are taught. They become skillful in yoking the oxen, harnessing the horses, driving the team, holding the scythe and the rake and the hoe. They are taught to make and to mend, to plant and to sow, to plan, to reap, and to harvest, to house and to feed and to water the stock, to kindle the fire on the hearth, and what not—to do, and to do well, all things, little and great, which make up the *summum bonum* of home life in the country. It is doubtful if for the operations of active military campaigning any other callings afford advantages in the way of practical instruction and preparation equal or superior to those derived from the daily drill of the farm work. With but the briefest intervals Zachary had this daily drill till he was twenty-three years of age.

At the time Aaron Burr's party threatened a terrible breach in the country during the year 1806 he joined a volunteer company and remained with it for a few months, participating in its duties, drill, and discipline. When the storm blew over he returned to his father's farm. It was, however, well known in the household that Zachary was restless and wished

Digitized by Google

much to go into the army. It is said that he was "an alumnus of William and Mary College." If so, he must, after Mr. Ayres's and his father's teaching, have simply submitted himself for examination and so won a degree from that venerable institution.

The testimony of Mr. Ayres represents Zachary as "quick in learning, and still patient in study." This epigrammatical statement is a key to his whole life. Herein lay the power of Washington, Scott, Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, and Thomas. Thomas, perhaps, was not so quick of apprehension as the other five, yet he was more persistent than any, and abundantly successful in his execution.

It is not excessive to put Taylor well up along this scale of men; but let us judge of the proper degree nearer the close of our sketch. He is to us at this stage but a farmer boy just emerging into manhood. He has health, vigor, a fair knowledge derived from elementary school-books, and is deemed by his few neighbors a prosperous and promising young man. He was, of course, acquainted with his brother William's army career, and doubtless, through correspondence and conversation with him during his furloughs, he had a clear knowledge not only of General Wayne and his glorious operations, but of Captain W. H. Harrison's work just begun in Indiana, who was soon, after Wayne's campaign, to be made secretary and afterward governor of all that territory beginning just across the Ohio River. He was already a careful reader of such books and papers as reached the valley of Bear-grass Creek. Something, not easily divined, never really described, made him sit still and ponder, made the blood of youth come and go in his cheeks, till a sudden impulse would set

Digitized by Google

him on his feet and a marked decision firmly close his lips. "Yes," he thought, "I must do something. How can I get a commission?" His cherished though seemingly hopeless longing was suddenly to be granted, but not in the way that he had dreamed or desired.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

James Madison's influence—Jefferson's appointment of Taylor to a first lieutenancy—First duty at New Orleans—Leave and sickness—Military study—His marriage—Promoted to the captaincy of the Seventh Infantry—General William H. Harrison's operations in Northwest Territory—Tecumseh and his brother—Captain Taylor's participation in the campaign—Tippecanoe—The War of 1812—The right of search claimed, and how instanced—A blockade—Taylor's patriotic feeling—Declaration of war—Approved June 18, 1812—Canadian hostile expedition—Major Muir and Chief Tecumseh—General Harrison's successful move—Fort Harrison, on the Wabash, commanded by Captain Zachary Taylor—The small garrison—Illness—The attack of Indians and how repulsed—Captain Taylor's own report—The road from Fort Harrison to Vincennes—The ten days of hope deferred—At last relief came—Captain Taylor's two communications to General Hopkins—General Hopkins's strong approval of Captain Taylor—The first brevet—General Hopkins advances—Major Taylor helps in the expedition—General Harrison commends him.

It is not certain that the influence of James Madison and other prominent relatives and friends exerted in Zachary's behalf, when several new regiments were organized, might not, sooner or later, have secured his commission; but while they were pressing his claims his brother William D. S. Taylor, second lieutenant of artillery, died; and so, it is said, without further objection, President Jefferson commissioned him a first lieutenant in the Seventh

Digitized by Google

Infantry. His commission was dated May 3, 1808. The young man was twenty-three years of age. In the fall of this same year the relative and friend of the family, Mr. Madison, was elected to the Presidency of the United States. Surely the auspices were now favorable to this young man's military prospects, a friend and relative at the head of affairs, and entering a first lieutenancy, a grade in advance of the ordinary appointments.

He reported for duty to the famous General Wilkinson, then in New Orleans. He had not, however, been long on duty in that then malarious region before he was taken down with the yellow fever. As soon as possible he returned to his Kentucky home to the care and nursing of his devoted mother. He must have had a considerable leave of absence, or, as is more than probable, have been for a time stationed in a more northern garrison, for we find two very important things were done by the ambitious lieutenant. He first took a very practical and complete course of military reading and study. Mr. Fry says of him at this time: "He appears to have employed his time sedulously in the study of his profession." *

He, as a second step, managed to take to himself a lovely young wife. During the second year of his service he evidently went back and forth from his Kentucky home to his father's old homestead in Virginia, and sometimes extended his reconnoissances into Maryland; for there, in Calvert County, he found that charming helpmate, Miss Margaret Smith, who consented to share his fortunes, and to whom he was

* The Life of Zachary Taylor. By Joseph Reese Fry and Robert Taylor Conrad, Philadelphia. 12 mo. 1847.

Digitized by Google

united in marriage June 18, 1810.* There are no more beautiful pictures of domestic peace and comfort than those sketched here and there in the West and South wherever this lovely, industrious, home-loving, Christian woman appears as the counterpart, the complement, the ornament of her strong, soldierly husband. There were no mental reservations, be assured, when she gave him her heart and hand.

In the same year, 1810, on account of an existing uncertainty as to the permanency of this new regiment (the Seventh Infantry), the older officers avoided as far as possible going into it, so that promotion became unusually rapid, and Zachary Taylor, soon after his marriage, was made, November 30, 1810, a captain. Taken in connection with his share of the family income, the captain's pay made the young people, as army gossips would say, "very comfortably off."

In 1811, not long after Taylor's promotion, the Seventh Regiment, either in part or as a whole, came North with the Fourth Infantry, three hundred and fifty strong, constituting an important part of the force with which General Harrison, acting as Governor of the Northwest Territory, was endeavoring to meet and overcome the combined attacks of several tribes of Indians not yet subdued. He had against him the celebrated Tecumseh and his scarcely less renowned brother, El-ska-wa-ta-wa, who was by white men called the Prophet. These energetic Indians—the one as a fierce warrior, and the other infatuating his followers by a new religion as pro-

* The record of this marriage is in Louisville, Ky. It took place in a little log-house on the Taylor farm about six miles above the city.

Digitized by Google

nounced as that of the modern Mahdi—went from tribe to tribe till the whole country north of the Ohio was as wild and dangerous as it had been before the great victory of Anthony Wayne.

General Harrison in his letters to Washington strenuously maintained that Great Britain persistently negotiated and made treaties with separate Indian nations, and was stirring up such leaders as Tecumseh and the Prophet to give trouble to the frontier and prevent the extension of the United States settlements to the North and West. There were several expeditions to the Northwest and North where the regulars that we have named and the Kentucky volunteers were more or less engaged. Captain Taylor, being called to active field duty, was obliged to leave his young wife and her first-born child with his mother at the Taylor farm. Nothing just here beyond the fact of his participation in this campaign appears of record.

Harrison, it will be readily recalled, succeeded in bringing the Indians to battle on his own chosen ground. In this combat on his side there were engaged principally Indiana and Kentucky militia and United States regulars, some nine hundred in all. The Indian warriors numbered about the same. It was a hard battle, but not very decisive. Harrison said in his report that "the Indians" who attacked three hours before daylight "manifested a ferocity uncommon even with them." The savages were, however, repulsed at every point, and General Harrison held for two or three days the field of Tippecanoe. Zachary Taylor could not have been commanding a company or have been present at all in this battle. He would surely have been mentioned

Digitized by Google

in the full reports. He was undoubtedly this seventh day of November, 1811, in some other part of the territory of operations. When we find him mentioned he is with detachments reconnoitring or holding points farther west.

This battle of Tippecanoe was on the eve of the great war with England in which Taylor bore a small part; so, in order to keep before us the fever and state of the country, it is well to sketch briefly its beginnings not only among the Indians, but also among the whites. The Indians were still numerous, but every year diminished their hunting-grounds and their fancied domain. The settlers, with the usual vanguard of frontier hunters and trappers and illicit traders, had been ever pushing them back toward the lakes on the north and toward the Mississippi on the west. The energetic Tecumseh and the Prophet, his brother, arising in Ohio, catching from somewhere ideas of combination, of discipline, and energy, akin to Cromwell's conception and outfitting, in fact gave evidence of real genius. They went from tribe to tribe; they cemented their wild forces and put them at the disposal of some Canadian or Englishman to work mischief. They organized single and joint attacks upon our forts all along the northern and western line of our extensive frontier as then existing, where, though justly so or not, our Western citizens imputed all the horrors of Indian war and Indian massacre to British influence. This was especially the case after the attack of the Leopard, a warship of Great Britain, upon the United States frigate, the Chesapeake, not far from Norfolk, Va.

The lieutenant commanding the Leopard had fired but a few shots, and the Chesapeake, carrying

Digitized by Google

our Commodore Barron and Captain Gordon, being in a shameful, unserviceable condition, had made but a single feeble reply before her flag was struck. About a dozen, including the commodore, were disabled—three by death. The British lieutenant boarded the Chesapeake and carried off four of her United States seamen, claiming them as deserters from the British navy. These all were claimed by Captain Gordon and our Government as Americans. True, the British lieutenant had exceeded his instruction, and some *quasi* apologies were offered by Great Britain! Yet one had died and another of the four had been already put to death through a court-martial before the other two men were restored.

Out of this singular affair grew those angry proceedings of Congress which at first resulted in prohibiting any vessels of the English navy from coming to our shores. The feeling against Great Britain was then bitter indeed and broadcast. Statesmen like Madison and Clay sought to settle everything for a time by negotiation; and many of the most prominent leaders were strongly opposed to another costly war, for no country could have been more thoroughly unprepared for such a conflict than our young republic, yet the currents of indignation and hostility were so deep and so swift that they easily swept away all barriers and forced the leaders to join the war cry, and so, it was hoped, bring to a close forever the arrogant conduct and unreasonable claims of British administration.

In these feelings of his countrymen Zachary Taylor shared. It was a war period. His patriotism had led him to seek the army. He entered that small body, and, as we have seen, believing a conflict

Digitized by Google

inevitable, or rather believing it already begun when Tecumseh and the Prophet sounded their battle cries, he labored with all his might to fit himself for any command or any responsibility that his country might devolve upon him. The actual declaration of war did not come so soon as he anticipated, but it came at last. That act declaring war was, June 18, 1812, approved by Mr. Madison, who, before the last election, had changed front on the question. It was, however, two months after the first hostilities before Captain Taylor was called to bear an active part in the second contest with England.

Major Muir, from Malden, Canada, of the British Auxiliaries, and Chief Tecumseh, had concerted to move against the two at that time remaining garrisons of the Northwest—one at Fort Wayne on the Maumee, and the other at Fort Harrison, a few miles above the present site of Terre Haute, on the Wabash. The Auxiliaries left Malden August 18, 1812, and were to co-operate with bands of Indian allies waiting for them *en route* in the valley of the Maumee. These bands of savage warriors were drawn from the Pottawattamies and the Ottawas. While they were stealthily approaching Fort Wayne, the Prophet was to lead an independent force of Indians of the Miamis and the Winnebagoes, at least four hundred strong, against Fort Harrison.

General Harrison himself sent a force in time to anticipate the move of Major Muir and Tecumseh, and defeat it. He himself with the main body passed rapidly from Cincinnati to Pequa, Ohio, having advanced troops into close proximity to re-enforce the garrison at Wayne before September 1st, the day selected for the combined hostiles to commence their

Digitized by Google

attack, but the general had not heard a word of the designs against Fort Harrison. Captain Zachary Taylor was there in command of a single company of the Seventh Infantry. His garrison all told (except a few women and children) was not over fifty, many of whom, including himself, had been some time ill from a prevailing fever. There were reports of several hundred Indians. They reached the fort under the cover of the night and began their vigorous assault about eleven o'clock of September 4th, and continued it with firing, shouting, and yelling till after daylight of the 5th. Captain Taylor's first report to General Harrison, which did not reach him at the time, has been preserved, and that tells the story. As it will subserve a double purpose—viz.: give some idea of his literary achievement at that early period of his life, and furnish a natural and uniform account of the battle itself—abundant extracts are selected and here introduced.

"FORT HARRISON, *September* 10 1812.

"DEAR SIR: On Thursday evening, the 3d inst., after retreat-beating, four guns were heard to fire in the direction where two young men (citizens who resided here) were making hay, about four hundred yards distant from the fort. I was immediately impressed with an idea that they were killed by the Indians, as the Miamis or Weas had that day informed me that the Prophet's party would soon be here for the purpose of commencing hostilities, and that they had been directed to leave this place, which they were about to do. I did not think it prudent to send out, at that late hour of the night, to see what had become of them [the citizens], and their not coming

Digitized by Google

in convinced me that I was right in my conjecture. I waited until eight o'clock next morning, when I sent out a corporal with a small party to find them, if it could be done without running too much risk of being drawn into an ambuscade. He soon sent back to inform me that he had found them both killed, and wished to know my further orders. I sent the cart and oxen, and had them brought in and buried; they had been shot with two balls, scalped, and cut in the most shocking manner. Late in the evening of the 4th instant old Joseph Lenar and between thirty and forty Indians arrived from the Prophet's town with a white flag, among whom were about ten women, and the men were composed of the chiefs of the different tribes that compose the Prophet's party. A Shawanoe man that spoke good English informed me that old Lenar intended to speak to me next morning and try to get something to eat. At retreat-beating I examined the men's arms and found them all in good order, and completed their cartridges to sixteen rounds per man. As I had not been able to mount a guard of more than six privates and two non-commissioned officers for some time past, and sometimes part of them every other day, from the unhealthiness of the company, I had not conceived my force adequate to the defense of this post should it be vigorously attacked. For some time past, as I had just recovered from a very severe attack of the fever, I was not able to be up much throughout the night. After tattoo I cautioned the guard to be vigilant, and ordered one of the non-commissioned officers, as the sentinels could not see every part of the garrison, to walk around on the inside during the whole night, to prevent the Indians taking any ad-

Digitized by Google

vantage of us, provided they had any intention of attacking us. About eleven o'clock I was awakened by the firing of one of the sentinels. I sprang up, ran out, and ordered the men to their posts, when my orderly sergeant, who had charge of the upper block-house, called out that the Indians had fired the lower block-house (which contained the property of the contractor, which was deposited in the lower part, the upper having been assigned to a corporal and ten privates as an alarm post). The guns had begun to fire pretty smartly from both sides. I directed the buckets to be got ready and water brought from the well, and the fire extinguished immediately, as it was perceivable at that time; but, from debility or some other cause, the men were very slow in executing my orders. The word fire appeared to throw the whole of them into confusion; and by the time they had got the water and broken open the door the fire had, unfortunately, communicated to a quantity of whisky (the stock having licked several holes through the lower part of the building, after the salt that was stored there), though they had introduced the fire without being discovered, as the night was very dark, and in spite of every exertion we could make to extinguish it. As that block-house adjoined the barracks that made part of the fortifications, most of the men immediately gave themselves up for lost, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting my orders executed; and, sir, what from the raging of the fire, the yelling and howling of several hundred Indians, the cries of nine women and children (a part soldiers' and a part citizens' wives, who had taken shelter in the fort), and the despondings of so many of the men, which was worse than

Digitized by Google

all, I can assure you that my feelings were very unpleasant, and, indeed, there were not more than ten or fifteen men able to do a great deal, the others being either sick or convalescent; and, to add to our other misfortunes, two of the stoutest men in the fort, and that I had every confidence in, jumped the picket and left us. But my presence of mind did not for a moment desert me. I saw, by throwing off part of the roof that joined the block-house that was on fire, and keeping the end perfectly wet, the whole row of buildings might be saved, and leave only an entrance of eighteen or twenty feet for the Indians to enter after the house was consumed; and that a temporary breastwork might be erected to prevent their entering even there. I convinced the men that this could be accomplished, and it appeared to inspire them with new life, and never did men act with more firmness or desperation. Those that were able (while the others kept up a constant fire from the other block-house and the bastions) mounted the roofs of the houses with Dr. Clark at their head (who acted with the greatest firmness and presence of mind the whole time the attack lasted, which was seven hours), under a shower of bullets, and in less than a moment threw off as much of the roof as was necessary. This was done only with the loss of one man and two wounded, and I am in hopes neither of them dangerous; the man that was killed was a little deranged, and did not get off the house as soon as directed, or he would not have been hurt; and although the barracks were several times in a blaze, and an immense quantity of fire against them, the men used such exertion that they kept it under, and before day raised a temporary breastwork as high as a

Digitized by Google

man's head, although the Indians continued to pour in a heavy fire of ball and an innumerable quantity of arrows during the whole time the attack lasted, in every part of the parade. I had but one other man killed, nor any other wounded inside the fort, and he lost his life by being too anxious; he got into one of the galleries in the bastions and fired over the pickets, and called out to his companions that he had killed an Indian, and neglecting to stoop down, in an instant he was shot dead. One of the men that jumped the pickets returned an hour before day, and, running up toward the gate, begged for God's sake for it to be opened. I suspected it to be a stratagem of the Indians to get in, as I did not recollect the voice; I directed the men in the bastion, where I happened to be, to shoot him, let him be who he would; and one of them fired at him, but, fortunately, he ran up to the other bastion, where they knew his voice, and Dr. Clark directed him to lie down behind an empty barrel that happened to be there, and at daylight I had him let in. His arm was broken in a most shocking manner, which he says was done by the Indians, which I suppose was the cause of his returning; I think it probable that he will not recover. The other they caught about one hundred and thirty yards from the garrison and cut him all to pieces. After keeping up a constant fire until about six o'clock the next morning, which we began to return with some effect, after daylight they moved out of the reach of our guns. A party of them drove up the horses that belonged to the citizens here, and, as they could not catch them very readily, shot the whole of them in our sight, as well as a number of their hogs. They drove off the whole of the cattle,

Digitized by Google

which amounted to sixty-five head, as well as the public oxen. I had the vacancy filled up before night (which was made by the burning of the block-house) with a strong row of pickets, which I got by pulling down the guard-house. We lost the whole of our provisions, but must make out to live upon green corn until we can get a supply, which I am in hopes will not be long. I believe the whole of the Miamis or Weas were among the Prophet's party, as one chief gave his orders in that language, which resembled Stone Eater's voice, and I believe that Negro Legs was there likewise. A Frenchman here understands their different languages; and several of the Miamis or Weas, that have been frequently here, were recognized by the Frenchman and soldiers next morning. The Indians suffered smartly, but were so numerous as to take off all that were shot. They continued with us until the next morning, but made no further attempt on the fort, nor have we seen anything of them since. I have delayed informing you of my situation, as I did not like to weaken the garrison, and I looked for some person from Vincennes, and none of my men were acquainted with the woods, and therefore I would either have to take the road or river, which I was fearful was guarded by small parties of Indians that would not dare to attack a company of rangers that was on a scout; but, being disappointed, I have at length determined to send a couple of my own men by water, and am in hopes they will arrive safe."

From Fort Harrison to Vincennes, apparently the temporary headquarters of Captain Taylor's regiment, the river and the trails were infested by small

Digitized by Google

parties of Indians, who fired upon his men at sight, so that his messengers who had tried the river were interrupted on their way and forced to return. It was known afterward that Taylor and his men had inflicted so much damage upon the attacking party that they had not the heart to return and renew the conflict; but nobody at the fort knew this, so that the first ten days after the siege was raised the inmates of the little garrison, almost without the necessities of life, were in a state of intense anxiety and suspense. After the first messenger came back, the captain sent his first sergeant and another enlisted man to try the trails, adding a few more words, addressed to General Harrison, to the message they bore:

"I wrote you on the 10th instant, giving you an account of an attack on this place, as well as my situation, which account I attempted to send by water, but the two men whom I dispatched in a canoe after night found the river so well guarded that they were obliged to return. The Indians had built a fire on the bank of the river, a short distance below the garrison, which gave them an opportunity of seeing any craft that might attempt to pass, and were waiting with a canoe ready to intercept it. I expect the fort, as well as the road to Vincennes, is as well or better watched as the river. But my situation compels me to make one other attempt by land, and my orderly sergeant, with one other man, sets out to-night, with strict orders to avoid the road in the day-time and depend entirely upon the woods, although neither of them has ever been to Vincennes by land, nor do they know anything of the country; but I am in hopes they will reach you in safety. I

Digitized by Google

send them with great reluctance, from their ignorance of the woods. I think it very probable there is a large party of Indians waylaying the road between this and Vincennes, likely about the narrows, for the purpose of intercepting any party that may be coming to this place, as the cattle they got here will supply them plentifully with provisions for some time to come."

The sergeant found General Hopkins at Vincennes. Of course, relief and provisions were sent to the brave captain, and all hearts among sympathizing comrades were thrilled with the story of the attack and defense of the fort. After he had verified Taylor's modest account, General Hopkins wrote: "The firm and almost unparalleled defense of Fort Harrison by Captain Zachary Taylor has raised for him a fabric of character not to be effaced by eulogy." The report of the affair went not only to Colonel Russell, his regimental commander, General Hopkins, and General, then Governor, Harrison, but to President Madison, who immediately nominated him to the United States Senate for the brevet rank of major.

Taylor, with his regiment, was kept in the Northwest Territory during the entire War of 1812 and 1814. The battle of Tippecanoe had not even broken up the Prophet's town. It became the head and center of a thousand petty depredations and small guerrilla affairs. The settlers were everywhere in terror of their lives all along the northern border from nightly forays of the savage foe. General Hopkins moved up to Taylor, who was still holding Fort Harrison. With some regulars and hasty levies of volunteers from the territory, he set out in about

Digitized by Google

a month after the attack at Fort Harrison to surprise and if possible destroy the numerous Indian villages in Illinois, in what was then called the Peoria district. He gave Major Taylor a section of his command. Owing to the misconduct of the volunteers, the expedition was a partial failure. But Colonel Russell, of the Seventh Regulars, with a detachment taking advantage of the absence from home of the warriors who were stirred up by General Hopkins's movement, destroyed some of their most important villages and *caches* of supplies.

The general himself, accompanied by Major Taylor, though deserted by the volunteers, turned northward to the Tippecanoe River and aimed his blows against the Prophet's village and against other Indian settlements in that quarter. There were many small combats The Indians would waylay and surprise the troops and then run; so that our men suffered severely in this thankless work of clearing a wilderness from savages. Their expedition on the whole was successful; and again our young officer was highly praised in orders by General Harrison. His dispatches, when giving honor to special gallantry, said: "And also to Captain Zachary Taylor, of the Seventh United States Regiment, for a prompt and efficient support in every instance."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

An increase of regiments—And then promotion to a majority—His Rock River expedition—A sudden reduction to ten thousand men—Major Zachary Taylor declines to go back to a captaincy—Again in civil life—How General William H. Harrison and other friends sought his return to service—Next recommissioned a major of the Third Infantry—A furlough spent in Kentucky—Again a promotion—A lieutenant-colonel, Fourth Infantry—On a great variety of duties, as recruiting, boards for constructions, for reorganizing the army, for uniform, etc.—Stationed at Baton Rouge—Then at Fort Crawford, Northwest Territory—Indian Superintendent for a time by detail—Incidents in the Black Hawk War—Taylor's superb regulars—General Atkinson's praises.

ABOUT four years previous to this second war of our republic the army, from almost nothing, as we have noted, was suddenly increased by several regiments. The augmenting went steadily on till peace commenced; so that we are not surprised to find that Zachary Taylor, May 15, 1814, received the regular commission of major in a regiment with as high a number as twenty-six—i. e., in the Twenty-sixth United States Infantry. After the promotion he had charge of an independent column during that year intended to operate against those portions of the combined tribes that were crossing the Rock River from Wisconsin, and making forays into the Peoria country and Indiana Territory.

Touching this important work, *Appletons' Cyclo-*

Digitized by Google

pædia of American Biography remarks: "In 1814, with his separate command, he, being then a major by commission, made a campaign against the hostile Indians and their British allies on Rock River, which was so successful as to give subsequent security to that immediate frontier. In such service, not the less hazardous or indicative of merit because on a small scale, he passed the period of his employment on that frontier until the treaty of peace with Great Britain disposed the Indians to be quiet."

In March, 1815, our army, naturally enough, for a simple peace establishment, was reduced to ten thousand men. Notwithstanding the large reduction, Major Taylor was retained in the small army, but with reduced rank. He was put back to a captain in the former regiment, the Seventh Infantry. This method was pursued after each of our wars, and many a good officer has been kept, with his own assent, in a lower grade than that which he held during the active operations of war. There was really no offense and no hardship in the matter. Major Taylor, after his long service in the wilds of the country, preferred to decline that backward motion, and was honorably discharged, June 15, 1815, some five months after the last battle of the war. Zachary Taylor made no complaint. He went straight home, as he himself expressed his purpose and conduct, "to make a crop of corn."

But neither the prominent officers, in or out of service (his friend General Harrison was among the latter), nor his influential relatives and friends, would long leave him to his corn-crop making and farm-ditching. His character, knowledge, and service were too much needed. So that one month less

Digitized by Google

than a year from the acceptance of his resignation, May 17, 1816, President Madison, whose own heart doutless pleaded for his esteemed and worthy relative, made him major in the Third Infantry.

We can not help thinking that this brief episode in civil life was most wholesome. It was a tonic against the too frequent reaction after the activity of war. It brought him into business relations with numerous civilians of his own age, and established friendships and confidences that were to come in play when they should be needed. Grant and Sherman, after the Mexican War, realized this civil boon, though to each of them it seemed at the time almost anything except a boon. Taylor's "civil" experience was less than theirs; but he might count the period of four years which they spent at the military academy for himself, for he had previously spent that in civil life.

A portion of the Third Infantry at the time of the return of Major Taylor was stationed in the far North, at Green Bay, Wisconsin, then wild territory, and he went there immediately and commanded Fort Winnebago for the two succeeding years. He then had a leave of absence for one year, which he passed with his family in Kentucky. He received his promotion meanwhile to the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Fourth Infantry, and at once went to New Orleans and reported to Colonel William King. He now came, by transfer, to the Eighth Regiment, and remained in the South till, on a second reduction of the army, he was again transferred to the First Infantry, June 1, 1821. Curiously enough, he passed to the Seventh Infantry the ensuing August, and back again to the First Regiment January 1, 1822,

Digitized by Google

and in that he remained a lieutenant-colonel for the next ten years.

During his majority and lieutenant-colonelcy a variety of duties fell to him. For example, in 1822, when in Louisiana, he was sent to establish and build Fort Jesup. It was placed on the extreme frontier of the State near the Texas line. It was a pleasant and convenient camping place for many enterprising emigrants to Texas, and its garrison, doubtless, no little encouragement to that brave band of our people who were striving, first, for the independence, and next were hoping for subsequent annexation of Texas to the United States. In 1824 he had, part of the year as a recruiting officer, another pleasant sojourn at his own favorite city of Louisville. The latter part of 1824 he was called to Washington on a large board of officers, of which General Winfield Scott was the chairman. It worked to create plans for the organization and government of the militia of the country, and to recommend a proper uniform. Taylor's views were very pronounced against a considerable minority on the board who wanted substantially to make regulars of the citizen-soldiery. General Scott sided with the majority, and an excellent report was adopted and sent to Congress.

During 1827 and 1828 Taylor was again in the Southwest. His post was for the most part at that beautiful place on the banks of the Mississippi, Baton Rouge, where his family subsequently in trying times found a secluded and charming home. The years 1829, 1830, 1831, and the early part of 1832, according to the Register, were passed in the Northwest; his headquarters were at Fort Snelling, that well-

Digitized by Google

built Northern fort which is situated at the confluence of the two great rivers, the Mississippi and the Minnesota, not many miles from St. Paul.

He appears, by the reports, to have been long "a superintendent" in charge of Indian affairs for a section of the Northwest, but this was, as customary at that time, in connection with his military command. His constant intercourse with the Indians, long experience in dealing with them, and his singularly substantial characteristics, made him feared and greatly respected by the Indians. They for a time put him in their soubriquets at the head of all chiefs who dealt with them.

Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor received his promotion to a colonelcy April 4, 1832, and passed to the command of the First Infantry. He had been almost thirteen years in the same grade. He was now forty-seven years of age, robust, studious, practical, in the very prime of his manhood. His new military station was Fort Crawford, whose post-office address was Prairie du Chien. His men, away there in that cold north country, were drilled in mid-winter by the colonel himself. When off duty, he was during the day generally to be found in his post library, where he soon made himself master of the more solid books, preferring works on military jurisprudence, international law, and historical sketches of battles and campaigns.

A visitor to Prairie du Chien, meeting him, was as much impressed by Colonel Taylor's well-furnished mind as by his dignified and hearty appearance. General Atkinson writes of Colonel Taylor, of date August 25, 1832: ". . . I crossed the Ouisconsin on the 27th and 28th ult., with a select body of troops, consisting of regulars, under Colonel Taylor, four

Digitized by Google

hundred in number, . . . amounting in all to thirteen hundred men, and immediately fell upon the trail of the enemy, and pursued it by a forced march, through a mountainous and difficult country, till the morning of the 2d inst., when we came up with his main body on the left bank of the Mississippi, nearly opposite the mouth of the Iowa, which [main body] we attacked, defeated, and dispersed, with a loss on his part of about one hundred and fifty men killed, and thirty-nine women and children taken prisoners; the precise number could not be ascertained, as the greater portion was slain after being forced into the river. . . . The remnant of the enemy, cut up and disheartened, crossed to the opposite side of the river, and has fled into the interior with a view, it is supposed, of joining Keokuk and Wapello's bands of Sacs and Foxes." Atkinson speaks in glowing terms of both Taylor's regulars and the volunteers in this and a preceding battle. He placed Black Hawk and other prisoners under Taylor's charge, who gave them a long journey southward to Jefferson Barracks, and delivered them over to the permanent garrison at that post.

There is a single incident of the Black Hawk War given at length by J. Reese Fry which is so characteristic that it is worthy of extract. Colonel Taylor was commanding volunteers and regulars. The volunteers refused to cross Rock River. "They were militia," they said, "called out for the defense of the State, and it was unconstitutional to order them to march beyond its frontier into the Indian country." Taylor said nothing, but sent back a report and waited for orders. "During the night orders came" for him to follow up Black Hawk to the last.

Digitized by Google

"The quietness of the regular colonel, meanwhile, had rather encouraged the mutinous militia to bring their proceedings to a head. A sort of town-meeting was called upon the prairie, and Taylor invited to attend. After a time, having heard enough, Colonel Taylor stepped forward and made a brief speech: 'I have heard,' he said, 'with much pleasure, the views which several speakers have expressed of the independence and dignity of each private American citizen. I feel that all gentlemen here are my equals —in reality, I am persuaded that many of them will in a few years be my superiors, and perhaps, in the capacity of members of Congress, arbiters of the fortunes and reputation of humble servants of the republic, like myself. I expect then to obey them as interpreters of the will of the people; and the best proof that I will obey them is now to observe the orders of those whom the people have already put in the places of authority to which many gentlemen around me justly aspire. In plain English, gentlemen and fellow-citizens, the word has been passed on to me from Washington to follow Black Hawk, and to take you with me as soldiers. I mean to do both. There are the flat-boats drawn up on the shore, and here are Uncle Sam's men drawn up behind you on the prairie.'" Of course, at this point all argument ceased, and the work, without regard to State lines, was, as we have seen, pushed on to completion. Herein was no undue recognition of State rights, and there was displayed the spirit of carefulness, submission to proper authority, firmness, and courage that it is ever madness to resist.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

The Florida troubles—Osceola—The Creeks—The Seminoles—The threatened Western removals—The black flag and massacres—Major Dade and his detachment—The Everglades of Florida—Old Generals Clinch, Jesup, and others—President Van Buren's message—Taylor's fac-simile letter written at Fort Crawford, July 14, 1837—Taylor's careless dress—A young officer's mistake and chagrin—General Jesup defeated and wounded at Jupiter Inlet, Fla.—General Taylor's arrival at Tampa Bay and Fort Gardner—His campaign of the Kissimmee and successful battle of Okeechobee—His dispatches—His excellent dispositions of troops and districts—He seeks to be relieved—Is sent to Fort Jesup, Louisiana.

AFTER Indian troubles had been allayed, though not permanently settled, in the then Northwest, after Tecumseh, Black Hawk, and the Prophet had passed from the stage, a fiery Spirit from the South suddenly sprang to the front, and for a time carried terror and destruction in his path. He bore among the Indians the beautiful euphonic name of *Osceola*. He appeared in Florida, though a Creek by birth, as a chief among the Seminoles. The Seminoles in the "thirties" had an abundance of special grievances and had added a hundredfold to their natural hatred of white men because of the great treaty which had been made after the manner of all our treaties with the Indian tribes. Some chiefs and followers had agreed to it, while other chiefs and their people, including

Digitized by Google

four or five hundred escaped slaves, had not agreed to its provisions. Three years were to be given to the Indians to effect their removal from Florida (such was the agreement on paper) to their new lands beyond the Mississippi. The malcontents declared they would not go, and as they saw the troops coming to enforce the terms of the hateful bargain, they succeeded in firing the hearts of the majority of the young warriors. This was the turbid condition of the waters when Osceola plunged in. He was a great natural leader. The terms which our whites used concerning him are probably true, such as "talented; implacable in hatred; full of cunning"; then suddenly, as he rose to leadership, "defiant, unscrupulous, hesitating at no crime, relentless, revengeful, reckless of danger," yet "wise in council and ambitious." As soon as he had stirred the warriors to fury, he unfurled the black flag and kept it at their head. He overbore all mild measures and timid advice. He slew every hereditary chieftain, whom our Florida officers had not already dethroned, that dared stand out against his bitter purpose. Such was the man—a *bona fide*, shrewd, conscienceless savage.

When the writer first passed along the paths just east of the plain at the West Point Academy he saw there in a pretty, shady nook, the monument to Major Dade and his companions. The inscription below on the modest shaft tells the story of "Dade's massacre." The story is substantially as follows: On December 23, 1835, six months after the expiration of the time of Indian removal, Major Dade with two hundred and twelve officers and enlisted soldiers set out from Tampa, Fla., to form a junction

Digitized by Google

with a few hundred other troops at Fort Drane, under the immediate command of the Department Chief, General Clinch. There had thus far been no outbreak of any considerable extent, so that the major had no special apprehensions of danger. As the detachment was leisurely marching along and passing one of those high wooded knolls peculiar to Florida, usually called hammocks or hummocks, where the trees and vines and roots are inextricably mingled, the fittest sort of a place for an ambuscade, the savages, who till that moment had not given the slightest sign of their presence, poured forth their full forces, at least three to one, upon the astonished command of Major Dade, firing as they came. Of course our regulars fought, as they generally do when brought into battle. Here against Alligator, the follower of Osceola, no surrender was dreamed of and little hope from the outset was entertained, so that Dade's men sold their lives as dearly as possible. Two hundred and nine of that devoted band were slain. Three badly wounded managed to hide in the thickets, and finally to work their way back to Fort Brooke to give their account of the bloody massacre.

After this sad affair and Osceola's attack upon General Clinch a month later, it is easy to imagine the consternation that followed throughout that thinly settled State, especially along the frontier which bordered the forests, the swamps, and the celebrated Everglades of Florida. Neither General Gaines, nor General Clinch, nor General Scott himself, who succeeded Clinch, nor General Jesup, could give satisfaction to the white inhabitants of the State, nor to the expectant authorities at Washington. The Indians only appeared suddenly to kill and outrage,

Digitized by Google

rob and burn, and then pass into their singular fastnesses. Here and there some old Indians, women and children, were run down and captured, but other tribes—probably increased by negroes and half-breeds—besides the Seminoles, when they heard of their success, came to swell the number of their fighting force, and so, though there were several combats and Indian massacres, no sensible progress toward the removal of the Seminoles, Creeks, and other bands was effected.

President Van Buren, in his first annual message of December 4, 1837, has one significant remark which shows that Indians and negroes and half-breeds, including the fierce Osceola, were not at this period of the war wholly the cause of the abnormal state of things in Florida. It is to this effect: "In most instances they [the savages] have been instigated to resistance by persons to whom the trade with them and the acquisition of their annuities were important; and some by the personal influence of interested chiefs." A year later, after the President had become more familiar with Florida, he gives a graphic picture of the situation. He says:

"The continued treacherous conduct of these people, the savage and unprovoked murders they have lately committed, butchering whole families of the settlers of the Territory without distinction of age or sex, and making their way into the very center and heart of the country, so that no part of it is free from their ravages; their frequent attacks upon the light-houses along that dangerous coast; and the barbarity with which they have murdered the passengers and crews of such vessels as have been wrecked upon the reefs and keys which border the

Digitized by Google

Gulf—leave the Government no alterative but to continue the military operations against them until they are totally expelled from Florida."

As the Indians had organized under their shrewdest and ablest leader, at last the War Department came to the wise conclusion to send there to oppose him its most experienced, most indomitable officer, though his rank might not yet rightly entitle him to a geographical department. By a fac-simile of a letter written by Colonel Taylor from Fort Crawford, dated July 14, 1837, we find that he and his regiment, the First Infantry, were then under orders for Louisiana, and that the headquarters would be at Fort Jesup, La., near the Texas border. He received instructions at some intermediate halting place or while *en route* to proceed to Florida and take command of the field force. The instructions were issued July 31st, and were to the effect that the First Infantry was to arrive at Tampa Bay between the 10th and 15th of October. Going down the Mississippi to New Orleans, Colonel Taylor doubtless passed with his regiment from the city by water to Tampa Bay, arriving in ample time for a compliance with his orders. Leaving at Fort Brooke Lieutenant-Colonel Davenport in immediate charge of the troops, the colonel appears to have set out for the department headquarters just then at Fort Drane, a post in Marion County, near Orange Lake. He may have taken a steamer, skirted the west coast northward, and ascended the Suwanee River to near Newnansville, and then have gone by stage to what is now Micanopy, and thence ten miles by Government conveyance to Fort Drane.

There is one of those traditionary tales located

Digitized by Google

at Newnansville and vicinity which probably had some foundation in fact. With all his virtues it is often stated that Colonel Taylor, though a good disciplinarian, in other regards was a little careless concerning the uniform of his officers and men, and especially so with his own. In fact, he never wore a complete regulation suit except when imperative duty, like that of a formal inspection, demanded it. He often had on some homespun material, wearing a loose sack-coat, and in the warm climate a broad-brimmed straw hat. The night after his arrival at Newnansville, so the story is told, he was sitting in some such old garb in the tavern office which had, as in the old inns, a bar at hand. With him were Lieutenant-Colonel Ichabod B. Crane, Colonel Croghan Ker, and Captain D. D. Tompkins, all veterans of the prairies and frontiers, and about as roughly dressed as Colonel Taylor himself. Suddenly, on the arrival of the Eastern stage, there appeared on the scene a sprightly young officer recently from the Military Academy, rather fine in general attire for a traveler, and not a little confident in the manner of his address. His linen duster but poorly concealed the bright buttons beneath. He was an army officer, and meant it should be so known. He at first took but slight notice of the farmer-looking men who sat there talking, smoking, or reading a chance paper. Then observing the oldest in appearance, he probed him for some information.

Q. "Well, old man, how are the Indians now?"

A. "I believe, sir, they are giving considerable trouble."

Q. "Oh, they are, are they? Well, we'll fix matters soon. I'm an army officer and on my way to take a hand in the war. How are the crops?"

Digitized by Google

A. "Very fair, sir, I understand, where the Indians can keep quiet."

And so on, with pert questions by the youth and very respectful answers from Taylor, who sturdily kept up the imputed character without betrayal.

At last the young man grew generous.

Q. "Come now, old codger, you and your neighbors take something—some beer with me?"

A. "Oh, certainly." They rose and solemnly pledged the bold young warrior.

About this time, the stage being ready, the veterans proceeded on their journey, while the young officer staid back for a brief good time before reporting to his command. A few days later he arrived at Fort Drane, and at the first inspection of his company by the senior commander present, what was his astonishment and mortification to see dressed in the full uniform of a colonel the old farmer of the tavern, and coming straight toward him. Colonel Taylor smiled when near him, and said reflectively: "Come now, old codger!"

The young man, after this mortifying interview, asked some experienced officers, with no little trepidation, what he should do? They laughingly said: "Oh, with Colonel Taylor, simply nothing!"

After a day or so the colonel called him up, and, as the young man tried to apologize for his rudeness, said: "My young friend, you have had a good lesson. Let me give you one piece of advice that I think will be of immense advantage to you: '*Never judge a stranger by his clothes.*'"

The incident was never alluded to again by Colonel Taylor.

The department commander, General Jesup,

Digitized by Google

whom Taylor was eventually to relieve, had, June 24, 1838, succeeding the arrival of infantry and cavalry re-enforcements including the First Infantry and General Twiggs's cavalry, a severe Indian combat at Jupiter Inlet. Here General Jesup was quite severely wounded in the face. He was so roughly handled by the foe that he lost all hope of getting the Indians removed from the State, and earnestly recommended that this purpose be abandoned, and that the enterprising savages and negroes be allowed for their occupancy a large portion of the State, especially the fastness that they held and so well knew how to keep and use. The results of General Jesup's fears and recommendations were soon after this to procure his removal from that command; but a few days before that battle of Jupiter Inlet, Colonel Zachary Taylor had in another part of the same field of operations a measure of success.

About the first of December, 1837, Colonel Taylor, passing from Tampa *via* Fort Frazier, had collected at Fort Gardner between eleven and twelve hundred men all told. What he and the brave men with him did during that month is best told in the account that he gave at the end of probably the most hardy and the most noticeable expedition that Florida ever saw. The report, in the form of a letter to the adjutant-general, is as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS FIRST BRIGADE, ARMY SOUTH OF THE WITHLACOOCHEE, FORT GARDNER, *January* 4, 1838.

"On the 19th ultimo I received at this place a communication from Major-General Jesup, informing me that all hopes of bringing the war to a close by negotiation, through the interference or media-

Digitized by Google

tion of the Cherokee delegation, were at an end, Aviaka [Sam Jones], with the Mickasukies, having determined to fight it out to the last, and directing me to proceed with the least possible delay against any portion of the enemy I might hear of within striking distance, and to destroy or capture him.

"After leaving two officers and an adequate force for the protection of my depot, I marched the next morning with twelve days' rations (my means of transportation not enabling me to carry more), with the balance of my command, consisting of Captain Monroe's company of the Fourth Artillery, total thirty-five men; the First Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Foster, two hundred and seventy-four; the Sixth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson, two hundred and twenty-one; the Missouri Volunteers, one hundred and eighty; Morgan's spies, forty-seven; pioneers, thirty; pontoniers, thirteen; and seventy Delaware Indians—making a force, exclusive of officers, of one thousand and thirty-two men, the greater part of the Shawnees having been detached, and the balance refusing to accompany me, under the pretext that a number of them were sick, and the remainder were without moccasins.

"I moved down the west side of the Kissimmee, in a southeasterly course, toward Lake Istopoga, for the following reasons: 1. Because I knew a portion of the hostiles were to be found in that direction. 2. If General Jesup should fall in with the Mickasukies and drive them, they might attempt to elude him by crossing the Kissimmee from the east to the west side of the peninsula between this and its entrance into the Okeechobee, in which case I might be near

Digitized by Google

at hand to intercept them. 3. To overawe and induce such of the enemy, who had been making propositions to give themselves up, and who appeared very slow in complying with their promises on that head, to surrender at once; and, lastly, I deemed it advisable to erect block-houses and a small picket work on the Kissimmee, for a third depot, some thirty or forty miles below this, and obtain a knowledge of the intervening country, as I had no guide who could be relied upon, and by this means open a communication with Colonel Smith, who was operating up the Caloosehatchee under my orders.

"Late in the evening of the first day's march I met the Indian chief Jumper with his family and a part of his band, consisting of fifteen men, a part of them with families, and a few negroes, in all sixty-three souls, on his way to give himself up, in conformity with a previous arrangement I had entered into with him. They were conducted by Captain Parks and a few Shawnees. He [Parks] is an active, intelligent half-breed, who is at the head of the friendly Indians, both Shawnees and Delawares, and whom I had employed to arrange and bring in Jumper and as many of his people as he could prevail on to come in. We encamped that night near the same spot, and the next morning, having ordered Captain Parks to join me and take command of the Delawares, and having dispatched Jumper, in charge of some Shawnees, to this place, I continued my march, after having sent forward three friendly Seminoles to gain intelligence as to the position of the enemy.

"About noon of the same day I sent forward one battalion of Gentry's regiment, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Price, to pick up any stragglers

Digitized by Google

that might fall in his way, to encamp two or three miles in advance of the main force, to act with great circumspection, and to communicate promptly any occurrence that might take place in his vicinity important for me to know. About 10 P. M. I received a note from the colonel stating that the three Seminoles sent forward in the morning had returned; that they had been at or near where Alligator had encamped, twelve or fifteen miles in his advance; that he [Alligator] had left there with a part of his family four days before, under the pretext of separating his relations from the Mickasukies preparatory to his surrendering with them; that there were several families remaining at the camp referred to, who wished to give themselves up, and would remain there until we took possession of them, unless they were forcibly carried off that night by the Mickasukies, who were encamped at no great distance from them.

"In consequence of this intelligence, after directing Lieutenant-Colonel Davenport to follow me early in the morning with the infantry, a little after midnight I put myself at the head of the residue of the mounted men and joined Lieutenant-Colonel Price, proceeded on, crossing Istopoga outlet, and soon after daylight took possession of the encampment referred to, where I found the inmates, who had not been disturbed. They consisted of an old man and two young ones, and several women and children, amounting in all to twenty-two individuals. The old man informed me that Alligator was very anxious to separate his people from the Mickasukies, who were encamped on the opposite side of the Kissimmee, distant about twenty miles, where they would fight

Digitized by Google

us. I sent him to Alligator to say to him, if he were sincere in his professions, to meet me the next day at the Kissimmee, where the trail I was marching on crossed and where I should halt.

"As soon as the infantry came up I moved on to the place designated, which I reached late that evening and where I encamped. About 11 P.M. the old Indian returned, bringing a very equivocal message from Alligator, whom, he stated, he had met accidentally; also that the Mickasukies were still encamped where they had been for some days, and where they were determined to fight us.

"I determined at once on indulging them as soon as practicable. Accordingly, next morning, after laying out a small stockade work for the protection of a future depot, in order to enable me to move with the greatest celerity I deposited the whole of my heavy baggage, including artillery, and having provisioned the command to include the Twenty-sixth, after leaving Captain Monroe with his company, the pioneers, pontoniers, with eighty-five sick and disabled infantry, and a portion of the friendly Indians; who alleged that they were unable to march farther, I crossed the Kissimmee, taking the old Indian as a guide who had been captured the day before, and who accompanied us with great apparent reluctance in pursuit of the enemy, and early the next day I reached Alligator's encampment, situated on the edge of Cabbage-Tree-Hammock, in the midst of a large prairie, from the appearance of which and other encampments in the vicinity, and the many evidences of slaughtered cattle, there must have been several hundred individuals.

"At another small hammock, at no great distance

Digitized by Google

from Alligator's encampment and surrounded by a swamp impassable for mounted troops, the spies surprised an encampment containing one old man, four young men, and some women and children. One of the party immediately raised a white flag, when the men were taken possession of and brought across the swamp to the main body. I proceeded with an interpreter to meet them. They proved to be Seminoles, and professed to be friendly. They stated that they were preparing to come in; they had just slaughtered a number of cattle, and were employed in drying and jerking the same. They also informed me that the Mickasukies, headed by Aviaka [Sam Jones], were some ten or twelve miles distant encamped in a swamp, and were prepared to fight.

"Although I placed but little confidence in their professions of friendship or their intentions of coming in, yet I had no time to look up their women and children, who had fled and concealed themselves in the swamp, or to have encumbered myself with them in the situation in which I then was. Accordingly, I released the old man, who promised that he would collect all the women and children and take them in to Captain Monroe at the Kissimmee the next day. I also dismissed the old man who had acted as guide thus far, supplying his place with the four able warriors who had been captured that morning.

"These arrangements being made, I moved under their guidance for the camp of the Mickasukies. Between 2 and 3 P.M. we reached a very dense cypress swamp, through which we were compelled to pass, and in which our guides informed us we might

Digitized by Google

be attacked. After making the necessary dispositions for battle, it was ascertained that there was no enemy to oppose us. The army crossed over and encamped for the night, it being late. During the passage of the rear, Captain Parks, who was in advance with a few friendly Indians, fell in with two of the enemy's spies between two and three miles of our camp, one on horseback, the other on foot, and succeeded in capturing the latter. He was an active young warrior armed with an excellent rifle, fifty balls in his pouch, and an adequate proportion of powder. This Indian confirmed the information which had been previously received from other Indians, and, in addition, stated that a large body of Seminoles, headed by John Cohua [Co-a-coo-chee] and, no doubt, Alligator, with other chiefs, were encamped five or six miles from us, near the the Mickasukies, with a cypress swamp and dense hammock between them and the latter.

"The army moved forward at daylight the next morning, and, after marching five or six miles, reached the camp of the Seminoles on the border of another swamp, which must have contained several hundred and bore evident traces of having been abandoned in a great hurry, as the fires were still burning and quantities of beef lying on the ground unconsumed.

"Here the troops were again disposed of in line of battle; but we found no enemy to oppose us, and the command was crossed over about 11 A.M., when we entered a large prairie in our front, on which two or three hundred head of cattle were grazing and a number of Indian ponies. Here another young Indian warrior was captured, armed

Digitized by Google

and equipped as the former. He pointed out a dense hammock on our right, about a mile distant, in which he said the hostiles were situated and waiting to give us battle.

"At this place the final disposition was made to attack them, which was in two lines, the volunteers, under Gentry, and Morgan's spies to form the first line in extended order, who were instructed to enter the hammock, and, in the event of being attacked and hard pressed, were to fall back in rear of the regular troops out of reach of the enemy's fire; the second was composed of the Fourth and Sixth Infantry, who were instructed to sustain the volunteers, the First Infantry being held in reserve.

"Moving on in the direction of the hammock, after proceeding about a quarter of a mile we reached the swamp which separated us from the enemy, three quarters of a mile in breadth, being totally impassable for horses, and nearly so for foot, covered with a thick growth of saw-grass, five feet high, and about knee-deep in mud and water, which [saw-grass] extended to the left as far as the eye could reach; and to the right, to a part of the swamp and hammock we had just crossed through, ran a deep creek. At the edge of the swamp the men were dismounted, and the horses and baggage left under a suitable guard. Captain Allen was detached with the two companies of mounted infantry to examine the swamp and hammock to the right, and, in case he should not find the enemy in that direction, was to return to the baggage, and, in the event of his hearing a heavy firing, to join me immediately.

"After making these arrangements I crossed the swamp in the order stated. On reaching the bor-

Digitized by Google

ders of the hammock the volunteers and spies received a heavy fire from the enemy, which was returned by them for a short time, when their gallant commander, Colonel Gentry, fell mortally wounded. They mostly broke; and, instead of forming in the rear of the regulars, as had been directed, they retired across the swamp to their baggage and horses; nor could they again be brought into action as a body, although efforts were made repeatedly by my staff to induce them to do so.

"The enemy, however, were promptly checked and driven back by the Fourth and Sixth Infantry, which in truth might be said to be a moving battery. The weight of the enemy's fire was principally concentrated on five companies of the Sixth Infantry, which not only stood firm, but continued to advance until their gallant commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson, and his adjutant, Lieutenant Center, were killed; and every officer, with one exception, as well as most of the non-commissioned officers, including the sergeant-major and four of the orderly sergeants, killed and wounded of those companies, when that portion of the regiment retired to a short distance and were again formed, one of these companies having but four members left untouched.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Foster, with six companies, amounting in all to one hundred and sixty men, gained the hammock in good order, where he was joined by Captain Noell, with the two remaining companies of the Sixth Infantry, and Colonel Gentry's volunteers, with a few additional men, continued to drive the enemy for a considerable time, and by a change of front, separated his line

Digitized by Google

and continued to drive him, until he reached the great Lake Okeechobee, which was in the rear of the enemy's position, and on which their encampment extended for more than a mile. As soon as I was informed that Captain Allen was advancing I ordered the First Infantry to move to the left, gain the enemy's right flank and turn it, which order was executed in the promptest manner possible; and as soon as that regiment got in position the enemy gave one fire and retreated, being pursued by the First, Fourth, and Sixth, and some of the volunteers who had joined them, until near night and until these troops were nearly exhausted and the enemy driven in all directions.

"The action was a severe one, and continued from half-past twelve until 3 P. M., a part of the time very close and severe. We suffered much, having twenty-six killed and one hundred and twelve wounded, among whom are some of our most valuable officers. The hostiles probably suffered, all things considered, equally with ourselves, they having left ten dead on the ground, besides doubtless carrying off more, as is customary with them when practicable.

"As soon as the enemy were completely broken I turned my attention to taking care of the wounded, to facilitate their removal to my baggage, where I ordered an encampment to be formed. I directed Captain Taylor to cross over to the spot and employ every individual whom he might find there in constructing a small foot-way across the swamp; this with great exertion was completed in a short time after dark, when all the dead and wounded were carried over in litters made for the purpose, with one

Digitized by Google

exception, a private of the Fourth Infantry, who was killed and could not be found.

"And here I trust I may be permitted to say that I experienced one of the most trying scenes of my life, and he who could have looked on with indifference, his nerves must have been differently organized from my own. Besides the killed, there lay one hundred and twelve wounded officers and soldiers who had accompanied me one hundred and forty-five miles, most of the way through the unexplored wilderness without guides, who had so gallantly beaten the enemy, under my orders, in his strongest position, and who had to be conveyed back through swamps and hammocks from whence we set out, without any apparent means of doing so. This service, however, was encountered and overcome, and they have been conveyed thus far and pushed on to Tampa Bay on rude litters, constructed with the knife and axe alone, with poles and dry hides, the latter being found in great abundance at the encampment of the hostiles. The litters were carried on the backs of our weak and tottering horses, aided by the residue of the command, with more ease and comfort to the sufferers than I could have supposed, and with as much as they could have been afforded in ambulances of the most improved and modern construction.

"The day after the battle we remained at our encampment, occupied in taking care of the wounded and collecting, with a portion of the mounted men, the horses and cattle in the vicinity belonging to the enemy, of which we found about one hundred of the former, many of them saddled, and nearly three hundred of the latter.

Digitized by Google

"We left our encampment on the morning of the 27th for the Kissimmee, where I had left my heavy baggage, which place we reached about noon of the 28th. After leaving two companies and a few Indians to garrison the stockade—which I found nearly completed on my return by that active and vigilant officer, Captain Monroe, Fourth Artillery—I left the next morning for this place, where I arrived on the 31st, and sent forward the wounded the next day to Tampa Bay, with the Fourth and Sixth Infantry, the former to halt at Fort Fraser, remaining here myself with the First, in order to make preparations to take the field again as soon as my horses can be recruited, most of which have been sent to Tampa, and my supplies be in a sufficient state of forwardness to justify the measure.

"In speaking of the command I can only say that, so far as the regular troops are concerned, no one could have been more efficiently sustained than I have been from the commencement of the campaign; and I am certain that they will be always willing and ready to discharge any duty that may be assigned to them.

"To Lieutenant-Colonel Davenport and the officers and soldiers of the First Infantry I feel under many obligations for the manner in which they have on all occasions discharged their duty; and although held in reserve and not brought into battle till near its close, it evinced by its eagerness to engage and the promptness and good order with which they [the men] entered the hammock, when the order was given them to do so, this is the best evidence that they would have sustained their own characters, as well as that of the regiment, had it

Digitized by Google

been their fortune to have been placed in the hottest of the battle.

"The Fourth Infantry, under their gallant leader, Lieutenant-Colonel Foster, was among the first to gain the hammock, and maintained this position, as well as driving a portion of the enemy before him, until he arrived at the borders of Lake Okeechobee, which was in the rear, and continued the pursuit until near night. Lieutenant-Colonel Foster, who was favorably noticed for his gallantry and good conduct in nearly all the engagements on the Niagara frontier, during the late war with Great Britain, by his several commanders, as well as in the different engagements with the Indians in this territory, never acted a more conspicuous part than in the action of the 25th ult.; he speaks in the highest terms of the conduct of Brevet-Major Graham, his second in command, as also the officers and soldiers of the Fourth Infantry, who were engaged in the action. Captain Allen with his two mounted companies of the Fourth Infantry sustained his usual character for promptness and efficiency. Lieutenant Hooper, of the Fourth regiment, was wounded through the arm, but continued on the field, at the head of his company, until the termination of the battle.

"I am not sufficiently master of words to express my admiration of the gallantry and steadiness of the officers and soldiers of the Sixth regiment of infantry. It was their fortune to bear the brunt of the battle. The report of the killed and wounded which accompanies this is more conclusive evidence of their merits than anything I can say. After five companies of this regiment, against which the enemy directed the most deadly fire, were nearly cut up,

Digitized by Google

there being only four men left uninjured in one of them, and every officer and orderly sergeant of those companies, with one exception, were either killed or wounded, Captain Noell, with the remaining two companies, his own company 'K,' and Crosman's 'B,' commanded by Second Lieutenant Woods, which was the left of the regiment, formed on the right of the Fourth Infantry, entered the hammock with that regiment, and continued the fight and pursuit until its termination. It is due to Captain Andrews and Lieutenant Walker to say they commanded two of the five companies mentioned above, and they continued to direct them until they were both severely wounded and carried from the field, the latter receiving three separate balls.

"The Missouri volunteers, under command of Colonel Gentry, and Morgan's spies, who formed the first line, and, of course, were the first engaged, acted as well or even better than troops of that description generally do; they received and returned the enemy's fire with spirit for some time, when they broke and retired, with the exception of Captain Gillam and a few of his company, and Lieutenant Blakey also with a few men, who joined the regulars and acted with them, until after the close of the battle, but not until they had suffered severely, the commanding officer of the volunteers, Colonel Gentry, being mortally wounded while leading on his men and encouraging them to enter the hammock and come to close quarters with the enemy; his son, an interesting youth eighteen or nineteen years of age, sergeant-major of the regiment, was severely wounded at the same moment.

"Captain Childs, Lieutenants Rogers and Flana-

Digitized by Google

gan, of Gentry's regiment, Acting Major Sconce and Lieutenants Hase and Gordon, of the spies, were wounded while encouraging their men to a discharge of their duty.

"The volunteers and spies, as before stated, having fallen back to the baggage, could not again be formed and brought up to the hammock in anything like order; but a number of them crossed over individually, and aided in conveying the wounded across the swamp to the hammock, among whom were Captain Curd and several other officers. . . .

"To my personal staff, consisting of First Lieutenant J. M. Hill, of the Second, and First Lieutenant George H. Griffin, of the Sixth Infantry, the latter aide-de-camp to Major-General Gaines and a volunteer in Florida from his staff, I feel under the greatest obligations for the promptness and efficiency with which they have sustained me throughout the campaign, and more particularly for their good conduct and the alacrity with which they aided me and conveyed my orders during the action of the 25th ult.

"Captain Taylor, Commissary of Subsistence, who was ordered to join General Jesup at Tampa Bay as Chief of the Subsistence Department, and who was ordered by him to remain with his column until General Jesup joined it, although no command was assigned Captain Taylor, he greatly exerted himself in trying to rally and bring back the volunteers into action, as well as discharging other important duties which were assigned him during the action.

"Myself, as well as all who witnessed the attention and ability displayed by Surgeon Satterlee,

Digitized by Google

medical director on this side of the peninsula, assisted by Assistant Surgeons McLaren and Simpson, of the medical staff of the army, and Doctors Hannah and Cooke, of the Missouri volunteers, in ministering to the wounded, as well as their uniform kindness to them on all occasions, can never cease to be referred to by me but with the most pleasing and grateful recollections.

"The quartermaster's department, under the direction of that efficient officer, Major Brant, and his assistant, Lieutenant Babbit, have done everything that could be accomplished to throw forward from Tampa Bay and keep up supplies of provisions, forage, etc., with the limited means at their disposal. Assistant Commissaries, Lieutenants Harrison, stationed at Fort Gardner, and McClure, at Fort Fraser, have fully met my expectations in discharge of the various duties connected with their department, as well as those assigned them in the quartermaster's department.

"This column in six weeks penetrated one hundred and fifty miles into the enemy's country, opened roads and constructed bridges and causeways, when necessary, on the greater portion of the route, established two depots and the necessary defenses for the same, and finally overtook and beat the enemy in his strongest position; the results of which movement and battle have been the capture of thirty of the hostiles, the coming in and surrendering of more than one hundred and fifty Indians and negroes, mostly the former, including the chiefs Ou-la-too-gee, Tus-ta-nug-gee, and other principal men, the capturing and driving out of the country six hundred head of cattle, upwards of one hundred head of

Digitized by Google

horses, besides obtaining a thorough knowledge of the country through which we operated, a greater portion of which was entirely unknown except to the enemy.

"Colonel Gentry died a few hours after the battle, much regretted by the army, and will be, doubtless, by all who knew him, as his State did not contain a braver man or a better citizen.

"It is due to his rank and talents, as well as to his long and important services, that I particularly mention Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. Thompson, of the Sixth Infantry, who fell in the discharge of his duty at the head of his regiment. He was in feeble health, brought on by exposure to this climate during the past summer, refusing to leave the country while his regiment continued in it. Although he received two balls from the fire of the enemy early in the action, which wounded him severely, yet he appeared to disregard them, and continued to give his orders with the same coolness that he would have done had his regiment been under review or on any parade duty. Advancing, he received a third ball, which at once deprived him of life. His last words were: 'Keep steady, men, charge the hammock—remember the regiment to which you belong.' I had known Colonel Thompson personally only for a short time, and the more I knew of him the more I wished to know; and had his life been spared, our acquaintance no doubt would have ripened into the closest friendship. Under such circumstances there are few, if any, other than his bereaved wife, mother, and sisters, who more deeply and sincerely lament his loss, or who will longer cherish his memory than myself.

"Captain Van-Swearingen, Lieutenant Brooke,

Digitized by Google

and Lieutenant and Adjutant Center, of the same regiment, who fell on that day, had no superiors of their years in service, and in point of chivalry ranked among the first in the army or nation; besides their pure and disinterested courage, they possessed other qualifications, which qualified them to fill the highest grades of their profession, which, no doubt, they would have attained and adorned had their lives been spared. The two former served with me on another arduous and trying campaign, and on every occasion, whether in the camp, on the march, or on the field of battle, discharged their various duties to my entire satisfaction.

"With great respect, etc., etc.,

"Z. TAYLOR, *Colonel Commanding.*

"*To* BRIGADIER-GENERAL JONES, *Adjutant-General, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.*"

This faithful story of a trying campaign of six weeks, a dreadful battle in the Everglades, and the self-sacrifice and suffering of his command, stamps the ability, the efficiency, the gallantry, and the subsequent gentleness of Colonel Taylor. His excellent wife, who never would be long separated from her husband and had accompanied or followed him to nearly every frontier post, did not fail him here. She remained at Fort Brooke (Tampa), and there met the column of wounded men as it slowly filed in and successively unloaded its pallid and helpless burdens at the temporary canvas hospital. Her positive helpfulness, her example, and her "unfailing hopefulness" in sad hours materially aided the perfunctory work of the medical officers, nurses, and attendants, so that many a poor fellow

Digitized by Google

who eventually recovered, never after that failed to speak of Mrs. Taylor with gratitude and affection.

Two substantial rewards, as a soldier counts rewards, came to Colonel Taylor for his well-timed victory. First there was an appreciative letter from the commander-in-chief, General Alexander Macomb, dated February 20, 1838; and, second, there followed in time the new commission to which we have previously referred, to wit: "Colonel Zachary Taylor is promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General by brevet for distinguished services in the battle of Kissimmee (Okeechobee) in Florida."

It was a little later when General Jesup asked to be relieved from that troublesome field, and the entire command was devolved upon General Taylor. The latter immediately introduced a new plan of operations, dividing his forces, volunteer and regular. He caused a reasonable limited district to be patrolled by the detatchment which he sent to occupy it. He armed the white settlers so that by stockading, a few assembled, if sufficiently watchful, could defend themselves against sudden assault. His men thus distributed had many small battles here and there which were reported successful, but still the end was not to come during his reign. He gathered up a few parties of hostiles and sent them West, yet the great body of the different tribes, with a sprinkling of escaped slaves, still clung to their impenetrable fastnesses and managed, at the most unexpected times, in small bands, to rob and outrage a family, to burn a house, to fire, always hitting their mark, from close thickets upon passing wagons, and then quickly to disappear without leaving a trail or trace that could be followed.

Digitized by Google

In his first visit, in 1856, to Florida, the writer remembers that the place where "Harney's surprise" occurred was pointed out to him on the Caloosehatchee, not far from Fort Meyers. In that vicinity, in accordance with a sort of half-and-half policy, lately introduced by General Alexander Macomb, a place for trading with the Indians was established, and Colonel Harney was sent with a detachment of dragoons to guard it. The scattered Indians soon found out this kind provision for them, and flocked in and bartered their skins, bows and arrows, and the trinkets of their own manufacture for the sutler's goods. The place was so generally understood and so well established that even that wary Indian fighter, Lieutenant-Colonel Harney, was, as if in a civilized center, off his guard. His camp was by the right bank of the beautiful river. On July 23, 1839, like the sudden bursting of a dam which was in apparent order, the Indians at the dawn of day swooped in upon the trading establishment, destroying everything as they rushed. Harney and a few of his men instantly, as they heard the first yell, ran, without stopping to dress themselves, into the water, and waded out to some boats anchored near at hand, and in these he and the others managed to escape. About twenty soldiers and citizens were slain. Some of those running down the river were decoyed, by a clear voice ringing out in good English, to the wooded bank and killed. Lieutenant-Colonel Harney never forgot this treachery, nor could apparent friendliness of savage foes ever find him again off his guard.

From that day the Indians were to be relentlessly followed till a complete and final surrender and removal were effected, under a new policy which grew

Digitized by Google

out of the morbid fears of settlers, notwithstanding the avarice of the traffickers and their numerous friends who strove to prolong the war. However, certain army men always insisted that they be allowed "the worthless parts of that wretched country." The army leaders, always having too few troops, became confused in their judgment, and even the dauntless Zachary Taylor, though commended for his success and his activity by Government and people, finally, after two hard unsatisfactory years, asked to be relieved from that situation.

His request was, though with considerable reluctance at Washington, at last, on April 21, 1840, granted; and so he passed back to Fort Jesup, La., to have, as department commander, charge of several States in the Southwest. This move afforded him a respite—a much needed rest—and this period of repose was to be of considerable duration. The solid, enduring work which, as yet unknown to anybody, was to come, demanded an interval of quiet waiting.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

General Taylor at Baton Rouge in 1840—The plantation—The beautiful home near the barracks—How Mrs. Holloway pictures the cottage—Mrs. Taylor's comfort and joy—How the civil experience ended—Sent to the Louisiana and Texas frontier—How the Mexican War began—Taylor's position—Taylor's letter of July 20th, New Orleans, 1845—Sets out for St. Joseph's Island—Moved to Corpus Christi—The forces—Twiggs's Cavalry—A pleasant camp.

DURING the year 1840 the headquarters of the First Infantry were at Baton Rouge, and General Taylor was stationed there; so I presume, if the new department of the Southwest had been announced in orders, as several authors intimate, with headquarters far away at Fort Jesup, that General Taylor must have asked to exercise the command from Baton Rouge. This accords too with the stories concerning his plantation and the modest little home of his family. Lossing gives a picture of the choice Southern cottage with its broad porches; and Mrs. Holloway, the authoress, says much of the sweet home and the family life there. She writes:

"The soldiers usually quartered at Baton Rouge were mustering along the banks of the Red River, and the buildings were left, save a single company of infantry, without occupants, and Mrs. Taylor could select her 'quarters' with all the facilities the place afforded. Leaving the imposing brick buildings, with

Digitized by Google

their comfortable arrangements for housekeeping, to the entire possession of one or two officers' families, Mrs. Taylor selected a little tumble-down cottage, situated directly on the bank of the river, which was originally erected for and inhabited by the captain commandant when the post belonged to Spain.

"In the long years of its existence the cottage, consisting only of a suite of three or four rooms, inclosed under galleries, had become quaint in appearance and much out of repair, and was hardly considered else than a sort of admitted wreck of former usefulness, left because it was a harmless, familiar object, entirely out of the way of the lawn and parade ground. To Mrs. Taylor's eyes this old cottage seemed to possess peculiar charms, for she promptly decided to give up the better quarters at her disposal, as the wife of the commander-in-chief of the military department, and move into this cottage.

"With the aid of her own servants, two in number, and the usual assistance always afforded by invalid soldiers unfit for military duties, she soon put the neglected place in proper order. It was remarked by the people of Baton Rouge how rapidly the old Spanish commandant's cottage became transformed into a comfortable dwelling under the superintendence of the new occupants. And in a country where so much is left to servants and where the mistress and daughters had so many at command, they set the noble example of doing much themselves.

"The house had but four rooms, surrounded on all sides by a veranda, and thus in the hottest weather there was always a shady side, and in the

Digitized by Google

coldest, one most sheltered; and so cozy and comfortable did the house become under the management of its new mistress, that Mrs. Taylor was most thoroughly justified in her choice by the universal commendation of the citizens of the town, that it was now the pleasantest residence in all the country round, and its immates were probably as contented and happy as people can be." As soon as he could, the general purchased not only this pretty cottage, but a large estate near at hand, higher up the river, and this ever after afforded him a convenient home and a place for his family during all subsequent field operations.

When in 1841 the First Infantry went back to the Northwest and divided itself betwen Forts Crawford and Snelling and a few other posts, General Taylor was transferred in July, 1843, to the Sixth Infantry; but he was kept on detached duty, commanding "Department No. 1"; and his headquarters, probably for the convenience of the supply corps, were put at New Orleans. This enabled him easily to inspect the scattered garrisons—such as Towson, Gibson, Jesup, Wood, Pike, Pickens, and others within his limits at will, and also to spend part of the peace-days on his own estate near Baton Rouge.

General Taylor could in any event always be trusted to give all essential thought and time to the public service. These glimpses into his public and private life afford samples sufficient to enable us to see what that life was during the five years of his residence on the Mississippi. When at one time he was offered a public reception he wrote, in declining, that he was hopeful of accomplishing the object of his having a frontier command, and his fellow-citizens

Digitized by Google

might be sure that he would not be recreant to his trust. This could not mean, however, that General Taylor was, from the time it became a national issue, in favor of the immediate annexation—or, as the word was, reannexation—of Texas to the United States. His sentiments are often expressed in his letters. In one he says: "At the last Presidential canvass (1844) it was well known to all with whom I mixed, Whigs and Democrats—for I made no concealments in the matter—that I was decidedly in favor of Mr. Clay's election." President John Tyler, after the death of General Harrison, made this one issue, the speedy annexation of Texas, the main plank in his platform; but Mr. Clay, when war seemed inevitable as a result, opposed him in this with all his might.

We then may understand General Taylor as simply a true and faithful soldier, loyal to his country and to his flag. The ostensible object of the formation of this department of the Southwest was: peace with the Indian tribes and peace, if possible, with other neighbors. The announced object by President and Congress was never till 1845 more than to observe and steady matters along the Texan border, where disturbance was likely to occur at any time. In another letter, written to a Mexican general, Taylor says: "I hardly need advise you that, charged as I am, in only a military capacity, with the performance of specific duties, I can not enter into a discussion of the international question involved in the advance of the American army." This one sentence explains the attitude of Taylor, Scott, and the commanders, military and naval, in the Mexican War.

The cause of the war may be briefly stated: Texas fought for some years for her independence.

Digitized by Google

She was greatly helped by men who, like General Houston, had gone from the United States and settled within her boundaries. Her efforts were at last so far successful that her independence was not only recognized by foreign powers, but finally there was a quasi-conditional acquiescence and recognition by the Mexican republic itself. Undoubtedly the enterprising American emigrants, who were foremost in fighting the battles of Texas, and never failed to come to the front when conventions assembled to form a "free and independent government," were all the time desirous of forming part and parcel of the great American republic. There were various reasons:

1st. Their population was sparse, and the people found it difficult to maintain themselves alone financially or defensively for any length of time.

2d. They better secured the kind of government they most desired under the ægis of our general government.

3d. The majority of the emigrants had come from the slave States, and they freely co-operated with the Southern political sentiment that had not failed from the first to keep an equipoise between the free and the slave country, particularly when new States had knocked at the doors of the Union for admission. Texas must swell the slave area. Texas can be divided when population shall warrant the division, and so furnish several new States.

These were reasons and arguments without and within our boundaries. The first propositions for annexation were favorably considered by the majority of Congress. For a State to separate itself

Digitized by Google

from one republic ostensibly to establish its own independent sovereignty, and then offer itself immediately to a sister republic, seemed to some of our statesmen to border upon sharp practice. It was too much like a husband seeking a divorce upon some pretense, while he cherished the secret design of marrying another.

It not only appeared faithless on the part of Texas, but, if we annexed, it argued a previous collusion on our part, and was sure to give offense to Mexico. Orators and statesmen for years rang the changes upon this and like objections to annexation. We mentioned the word reannexation. This was a claim set up by those who, with much show of reason, tried to demonstrate that Texas once belonged to the United States in the Louisiana purchase, and had, of course, been improperly severed by the Mexican people. It was therefore claimed to be right and proper that Texas should be reunited to the American republic.

Just before President John Tyler's term expired this measure of annexation—which, against the policy and platform of the party that elected him, he had ardently supported—was passed by Congress. It became a law March 1, 1845. The Hon. James G. Blaine, looking back, remarks: "Its terms were promptly accepted by Texas, and at the next session of Congress, beginning December, 1845, the constitution of the new State was approved. Historic interest attached to the appearance of Sam Houston and Thomas J. Rusk as the first senators from the great State which they had torn from Mexico and added to the Union." He adds some further sentiments that some aged Whigs would hardly indorse,

Digitized by Google

but which now commend themselves to the majority of thinking people. He writes:

"The lapse of forty years and the important events of intervening history gave the opportunity for impartial judgment concerning the policy of acquiring Texas. We were not guiltless towards Mexico in originally permitting if not encouraging our citizens to join in the revolt of one of the States of that Republic. But Texas had passed definitely and finally beyond the control of Mexico, and the practical issue was, whether we should incorporate her in the Union or leave her to drift in uncertain currents —possibly to form European alliances, which we should afterwards be compelled, in self-defense, to destroy. An astute statesman of that period summed up the whole case when he declared that it was wiser policy to annex Texas, and accept the issue of immediate war with Mexico, than to leave Texas in nominal independence to involve us probably in ultimate war with England. The entire history of subsequent events has vindicated the wisdom, the courage, and the statesmanship with which the Democratic party dealt with this question in 1844."

It will be readily recalled that the Mexican Minister, on the passage of the joint resolution by our Congress, demanded his passports and left the country. President Polk, though just elected, did not hesitate to grapple with the difficulties that immediately arose. Mexico went further than her Minister's action and protest. She organized an army, and publicly proclaimed her intention to go to war with the United States; though not actually declaring war, she would certainly cross the boundaries and make an effort to seize upon Texas. These facts Mr.

Digitized by Google

Polk set forth in a message to Congress and avowed his intention, as a precautionary act, to order a strong naval squadron to the Mexican coast and "to concentrate an efficient military force on the Western frontier of Texas."

Texas laid claim to the Rio Grande del Norte as the proper boundary to her domain. Mexico, now bent on a quarrel, insisted that the Texas and Mexican dividing line should be the Nueces River. The aggressive party was in power at Washington, and so the Texas claim was warmly sustained by the administration; still, President Polk at first made an effort to settle the question in dispute by negotiation, which could easily have been done had Mexico been willing to yield the two principal points at issue—viz.: First, the right of Texas as an independent State to seek and receive admission into our Union. Second, the right of Texas, and hence of the United States, to the region lying between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. Mr. Polk had the able and energetic William L. Marcy as Secretary of War.

The author, Fayette Robinson, in his volume entitled *The Army*, places General Taylor, May 28, 1845, at Fort Jesup, La. The headquarters, "army of observation," however, were at New Orleans; so that General Taylor must have gone to that border post, as is most probable, in order to carry out Mr. Marcy's instructions which he received at that date —to wit: To get as near Texas as he could while waiting for Texas' accepting our conditions of admission, to keep his troops in hand ready to cross the Texas line, "to repel invasion either of Mexicans or Indians," to call for volunteers should Mexico be-

Digitized by Google

gin war, and to keep himself informed of Texas' action by holding communication with that Government at the town of Washington, Texas, and with Hon. A. J. Donelson, the United States agent resident there.

The Texas Congress assembled in accordance with President Anson Jones's call of date June 4, at Washington, Texas, June 16, 1845. After debate, by a joint resolution approved June 23, 1845, the Congress assented to the conditions for annexation, and ordered a call for a convention to assemble at the city of Austin, July 4, 1845. The convention met pursuant to the above call, and on the day it assembled, passed unanimously an ordinance, fifty-seven delegates sent from previous county conventions subscribing to the same. The last clause of the ordinance is as follows: "Now, in order to manifest the sentiment of the people of this republic, as required in the above recited portions of the said resolutions (those of the Texas Congress, and of the United States Congress, March 1, 1845), we, the deputies of the people of Texas, in convention assembled, in their name, and by their authority, do ordain and declare that we assent to and accept the proposals, conditions, and guarantees contained in the first and second sections of the resolutions of the Congress of the United States aforesaid."

On June 28 Mr. Donelson wrote an important letter to General Taylor, still at Fort Jesup, and he did this in anticipation of the favorable action of the convention. A few extracts will explain the situation: "At all events, it [the invasion] is so probable as to justify the removal of your force, without delay, to the Western frontier of Texas, in order

Digitized by Google

that you may be ready to give the protection which the President of the United States has felt himself authorized to offer. . . . I would advise you to send your dragoons overland. . . . Your infantry . . . with transportation from New Orleans to Corpus Christi, as being the most certain and less expensive route . . . Corpus Christi is the most western point now occupied by Texas. . . . But it should be distinctly understood that your action will be strictly defensive, and aimed at the protection of the rights of Texas."

After showing General Taylor the disputed territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, Mr. Donelson remarks: "The threatened invasion, however, of Texas, is founded upon the assumption that she has *no territory* independent of Mexico." And lastly, evidently the inspiration of President Polk himself, he adds: "You can safely hold possession of Corpus Christi and all other points up the Nueces; and if Mexico attempts to dislodge you, drive her beyond the Rio Grande." Curiously enough, thirteen days earlier—June 15—George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, and acting Secretary of War, prophet-like, informed General Taylor that on July 4 the people of Texas would have acceded to the union and Texas become *de facto* and *de jure* one of the United States. He was forthwith ordered to march to the mouth of the Sabine, or wherever he might think it advisable within Texas. He was also authorized to occupy any post on or near the Rio Grande which he might think necessary to repel invasion. Mr. Bancroft at this time forbade him to cross the Rio Grande, "unless Mexico should make the first attack."

Digitized by Google

It has been necessary to be thus specific in showing General Taylor's instructions, in order to demonstrate that there was no effort or haste on his part to inaugurate a war. The Washington, D. C., authorities were, as we notice, even ahead of those in Texas. But probably our administration hoped that we might not be compelled beyond a defensive atttiude. Donelson shows pretty plainly in his dispatches that agents from England and France to Mexico worked against this annexation and warmly favored the Mexican threats of war.

General Taylor came back from the Lousiana frontier to New Orleans, where he hastened the preparations for embarking his infantry, artillery, and supplies. He soon received from the War Department a reiteration of instructions similar to those above detailed. They were dated at Washington, July 8, and acknowledged by a brief letter from Taylor dated July 20. This letter is so expressive and characteristic of General Taylor that it is inserted in full:

"HEADQUARTERS FIRST MILITARY DEPARTMENT,
NEW ORLEANS, LA., *July* 20, 1845.

"SIR: I respectfully acknowledge your communication of July 8, conveying the instructions of the Secretary of War of the same date, relative to the Mexican settlements on this side of the Rio Grande. These instructions will be closely obeyed; and the Department may rest assured that I will take no step to interrupt the friendly relations between the United States and Mexico. I am gratified at receiving these instructions, as they confirm my views, previously

Digitized by Google

communicated, in regard to the proper line to be occupied at present by our troops.

"I am, sir, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR,

"*Brevet Brigadier-General U. S. A., Commanding.*

"TO THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE ARMY, *Washington, D. C.*"

General Taylor, with eight companies of the Third Infantry, left New Orleans by transports so as to arrive at St. Joseph's Island, Texas, July 25. He found "the difficulties of a debarkation on this coast and of establishing depots for supplying the army" much greater than he had anticipated. He had now received positive information from Austin of the action of the Texas convention; he named his forces "Army of Occupation," and he still advised not to send two companies to Austin, but to keep concentrated till Mexico should show her hand.

In twenty days he had sufficiently reconnoitred the coast and had moved up to Corpus Christi; he had just received the news that Mexico had taken "the preparatory steps" toward a declaration of war against the United States; he gave the report of General Arista's intended move from Monterey forward to Matamoras, August 4, with fifteen hundred men, five hundred being cavalry; but did not hear that an invasion of Texas was yet contemplated.

There is abundance of interesting correspondence between General Taylor and the War Department and other such with the Texas officials. More troops soon followed the Third Infantry to Corpus Christi, among them the Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth

Digitized by Google

Infantry, and considerable artillery, besides the Louisiana volunteers. He says of his military position (October 4, 1845) that it combined many advantages—"healthy, easily supplied, and well situated to hold in observation the course of the Rio Grande from Matamoras to Laredo." It exercised a salutary effect upon the Mexicans. . . . "They are struck by the spectacle of a large camp of well-appointed and disciplined troops, etc." Still, if he understands the views of the Government—viz., to make the Rio Grande the ultimatum—he "can not doubt that the settlement will be greatly facilitated and hastened by our taking possession at once of one or two suitable points on or quite near that river; should he be ordered forward, he recommends Point Isabel and Laredo for depot and observing stations. "Isabel is accessible by water," and easily defended; "Laredo (on the left bank of the Rio Grande) will require a land march"; he was already reconnoitring in view of the apparent wishes, but not yet the instructions, of the administration; he had from Governor Anson Jones the promise of one thousand Texas volunteers; a part of this promise was fulfilled; he went out to meet two squadrons of the Second regiment of dragoons, who were approaching Corpus Christi, and August 27 escorted them to the vicinage of his beautiful camp. They, under the famous Colonel Twiggs, had marched from Fort Jesup, La., to Corpus Christi in thirty-two days, resting eight days *en route*. The distance in a right line is about four hundred miles, but the dragoons by the routes they took made at least five hundred. A writer says: "The position taken by General Taylor is one of extreme beauty, and when our eyes first rested upon his camp,

Digitized by Google

clustered with a thousand spotless white tents along the shelly margin of the shore of Corpus Christi Bay, irresistible bursts of admiration followed. . . ."

The Louisiana volunteers had the left of this charming camp, Twiggs with his dragoons the right, while the center was filled by the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth regiments of U. S. Infantry, and a battalion of artillery troops equipped as infantry. The salubrity of the climate here on Taylor's plateau could hardly be excelled in Italy. The days even in summer were comfortable under the constant breezes, and the nights always cool, and the troops not, as in Florida, worried by fleas or mosquitoes. They had oysters in abundance and fish at will. The hunting also rewarded the efforts of officers and men when allowed to go beyond the encampment. Here, then, at Corpus Christi, the little army of occupation, perhaps all told three thousand souls, remained till March 8, 1846. Here his army obtained that discipline, drill, organization, essential instruction, and social cementing which such a completely furnished, untiring general as Zachary Taylor could secure to it. It became strong and conscious of its strength, under the leader that the soldiers believed in; this was an *esprit de corps* hard to produce, but, when produced, hard enough for a foe to face and overcome.

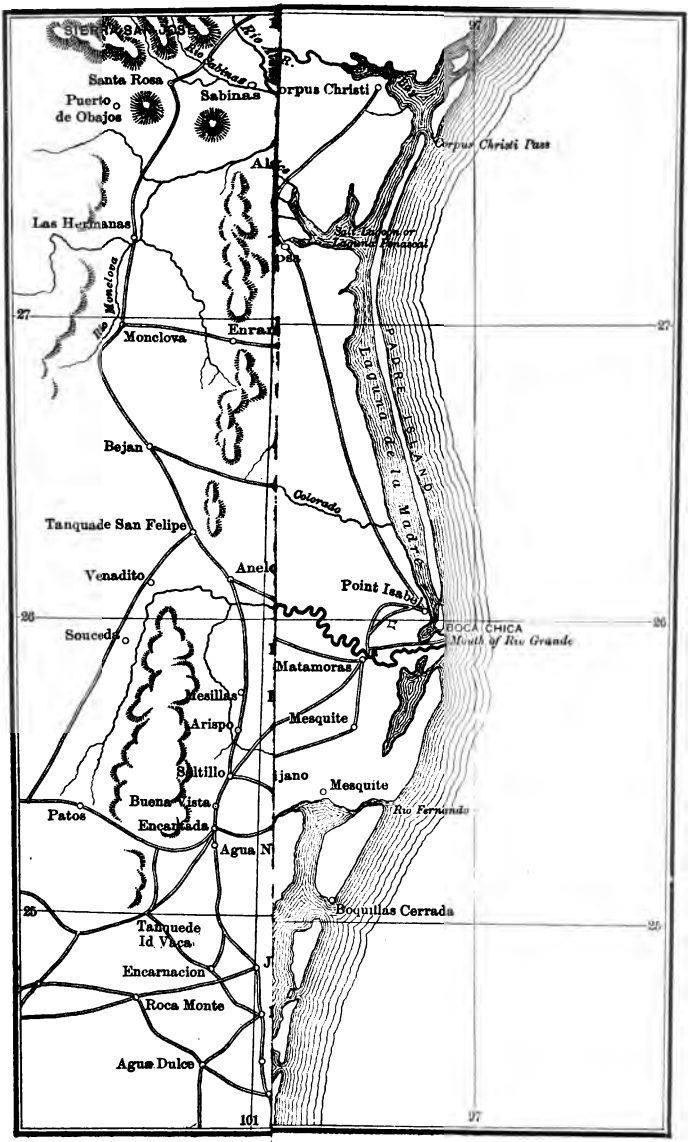
Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

Holding the Nueces—Rio Grande claimed—Testimony of a distinguished friend still living—Taylor's judiciousness—Insists on orders—The move to Point Isabel—General Taylor by land—Major Monroe by sea—Mexican generals, Mejia and Ampudia—What they did—Taylor's correspondence with the enemy—His first discouragements and losses—How operations were commenced in the Rio Grande valley—The blockade of the Rio Grande (or Rio del Norte)—Arista's coming—His aims—His strong protest—General Taylor's reply.

THIS is the situation March 1, 1846: General Taylor occupied the line of the Nueces, and for defensive purposes can hold it against successful dislodgment. He has sufficiently reconnoitred all the territory and all the coast as far as the Rio Grande. If the Government decides to make the Rio Grande the boundary, General Taylor deems it wise to move to that river before the Mexican general shall take the initiative. In case this be done, Point Isabel (held by a small detachment and the navy), provided a vessel of war will come and stay, will constitute the main depot of supply. General Taylor was a judicious soldier. He had long schooled himself never to deviate from his instructions except when there was a plain, indisputable necessity for it, and so now, before breaking camp, he reviewed his orders and discussed them with his trusted staff.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A distinguished writer, Dr. Francis W. Upham, of New York, who was at that time in the prime of his young manhood and who reveres the memory of our hero, General Taylor, almost worshiping at his shrine, now makes, concerning the period at Corpus Christi, a very suggestive recital of the testimony of an army friend. He says: "On the question of whether the Mexican War was the deliberate plan and purpose of President Polk, I have thought and inquired much, and the result has been to show me the uncertainty and doubt which hangs, and will forever, around many important and interesting questions. As bearing upon this, let me state that I formed the acquaintance of Captain Cram, who at his death had become an officer of much higher rank, an officer of the engineers, employed at that time on the coast survey. Captain Cram was with the army commanded by General Taylor, but, falling a victim to the malarious nature of that country, he was sent North for his health before the battle of Palo Alto. At the time he was employed on the coast survey near Portsmouth, N. H., he had a very sad and dangerous relapse, at which time I took care of him. I merely state this to show the nature of the intercourse between us. He told of a council or conference which General Taylor held with such officers as were near his person, and at which he himself was present, at receiving a voluminous dispatch from Mr. Marcy, Secretary of War. In this long letter, written, of course, with the approval of President Polk, the Secretary argued in favor of the policy of the army moving over to the extreme limit of the territory that was in dispute—that is, to the Rio Grande; and it was clearly apparent that, whatever might have been

Digitized by Google

the judgment of so clear-headed a man as the Secretary, the administration was decidedly in favor of it. The day was hot, and in the sultry air General Taylor listened to the dispatch till he was fully possessed of the idea that his Government wished the army to march, and so paid small attention to the few words which concluded the message. He said: 'Gentlemen, it seems to me that our orders are that this army move at once to the Rio Grande.' Captain Cram, who appears to have been somewhat of a favorite with General Taylor, who had been lately a large planter and interested in engineering operations on his plantation, ventured to say to the general: 'Before acting upon this, permit me to call your attention to the few lines that conclude this long dispatch.' General Taylor was at once on the alert, and as soon as these few lines were read again he saw that the letter appeared to place the whole responsibility of the movement upon him, and with the evident intention of shielding the Secretary. As soon as Taylor's mind was brought to bear on these few lines, he turned to his adjutant and told him to write a dispatch to this effect: 'This army will obey any orders that may be received from the Government; and if it wills that this army march to the Rio Grande, an order must issue to that effect.' That was not a dispatch to be trifled with, and the order at last came imperative." On February 4, 1846, the general acknowledged the receipt of a communication from Mr. Marcy containing these very instructions of the President—i. e., "to move forward with my force to the Rio Grande." Captain Cram gave Mr. Upham the impression that General Taylor was remarkable in many ways, and particularly a

Digitized by Google

man of more general intelligence than was commonly, at that time, credited to him—judicious, decided, and yet courteous in his manner.

Everything at Corpus Christi was in readiness by March 12. Major Monroe went with transports by water. He took with him a battery of field guns and a siege train and several officers of Taylor's permanent staff. Instead of a ship-of-war, the revenue cutter Woodbury, Captain Foster commanding, accompanied this expedition. All supplies not taken by the marching men went this way to Brazos Santiago, and thence through the straits to Point Isabel. The water movement was to regulate itself as to time by the land march.

General Taylor's famous peace orders were issued about this time of setting out. They were printed in Spanish and in English and widely circulated among the inhabitants along the coast. They show that his forward movement was no secret spring or sudden seizure, and need not have led to war, and doubtless would not have, had there not been other causes.

Here is an extract of field orders: "The army of occupation of Texas being about to take position upon the left bank of the Rio Grande, under the orders of the Executive of the United States, the General-in-Chief desires to express the hope that the movement will be advantageous to all concerned, and with the object of attaining this laudable end he has ordered all under his command to observe, with the most scrupulous respect, the rights of all the inhabitants who may be found in peaceful prosecution of their respective occupations, as well on the left as on the right side of the Rio Grande. . . . Whatso-

Digitized by Google

ever may be needed for the use of the army will be bought by the proper purveyor, and paid for at the highest price. The General-in-Chief has the satisfaction to say that he confides in the patriotism and discipline of the army under his command, but that he feels sure that the orders will be obeyed with the utmost exactness."

Habitually during this forward movement these small divisions which were organized into brigades for the convenience of the camps, the supply, and the essential mutual support in case of open hostilities, were some few miles apart. General Taylor moved along with a designated brigade till the army had reached and passed the Colorado. Then while he sent the main column straight forward toward what afterward became Fort Brown, opposite Matamoras, he himself took Colonel Twiggs's dragoons with him as an escort and deviated to the left and eastward, aiming to reach Point Isabel, and so in the outset secure to himself a proper base of supply.

There was little vegetation along the line of the march from Corpus Christi, and the water supply was poor enough. The soldiers had more than once the common but irritating experience of all who pass over comparatively barren prairies in a hot climate. Sheets of water, lakes and streams, and green trees would spread themselves out before them, and when they had eagerly pressed forward to quench their ever-increasing thirst, or gain the tempting shade, the deception of the delusive mirage would at last be revealed. The vision was more real when Mexicans, mounted, appeared here and there, an observing force, only to retire before the steady advance of the army.

Digitized by Google

At the Colorado valley there was great refreshment and invigoration for men and animals, for there they found abundant water. There is no better or briefer description of the military situation March 25, 1846, than General Taylor's own dispatch, written after his arrival at Point Isabel. It is addressed to the Adjutant-General at Washington, D. C. He writes:

"After a march of fifteen miles (from the Colorado) we reached, on the morning of the 24th, a point on the route from Matamoras to Point Isabel, eighteen miles from the former and ten miles from the latter place. I here left the infantry brigades under General Worth, with instructions to proceed in the direction of Matamoras until he came to a suitable position for encampment, where he would halt, holding the route in observation, while I proceeded to this point to communicate with our transports, supposed to have arrived in the harbor, and make the necessary arrangements for the establishment and defense of a depot."

En route the general met some Mexicans bearing a white flag. "It proved," he continues, "to be a civil deputation from Matamoras, desiring an interview with me. I informed them that I would halt at the first suitable place on the road and afford them the desired interview. It was, however, found necessary, from want of water, to continue the route to this place. The deputation halted while yet some miles from Point Isabel, declining to come farther, and sent me a formal protest of the prefect of the northern district of Tamaulipas against our occupation of the country, which I inclose herewith. At this moment it was discovered that the buildings at

Digitized by Google

Point Isabel were in flames. I then informed the bearer of the protest that I would answer it when opposite Matamoras, and dismissed the deputation. I considered the conflagration before my eyes as a decided evidence of hostility, and was not willing to be trifled with any longer, particularly as I had reason to believe that the prefect, in making this protest, was but a tool of the military authorities at Matamoras. The advance of the cavalry fortunately arrived here in season to arrest the fire, which consumed but three or four houses.

"The post captain who committed the act under the orders, it is said, of General Mejia, had made his escape before its [the cavalry's] arrival. . . . I was gratified to find that the water expedition had exactly answered to our land movement, the steamers arriving in the harbor only two or three hours before we reached Point Isabel, with the transports close in their rear. The Porpoise and Lawrence, brigs of war, and cutter Woodbury are lying outside. I have thought it necessary to order Captain Porter's company to this place to re-enforce Major Monroe. . . . The engineer officers are now examining the ground with a view to tracing lines of defense and strengthening the position. As soon as a sufficient amount of supplies can be thrown forward toward Matamoras, I shall march in the direction of that town and occupy a position as near it as circumstances will permit." A single sentence from the protest of the prefect explains the grounds taken by the Mexicans at that movement. "So long as it [General Taylor's army of occupation] remains within the territory of Tamaulipas, the inhabitants must consider that whatsoever protestations of peace may

Digitized by Google

be made, hostilities have been openly commenced by your Excellency, the lamentable consequences of which will rest before the world exclusively on the heads of the invaders."

General Taylor now turned his force toward the Rio Grande. With his little army he marched boldly toward the river till Matamoras from the opposite bank was in sight, and there encamped. The 28th of March, sixteen days from his departure from Corpus Christi, marks the possession of the great river boundary which Mexico, still claiming the whole of Texas, purposed should not be held by the United States without a struggle. General Ampudia was on his way to relieve and re-enforce Mejia, while General Taylor was strengthening his position by defensive works and urgently calling for recruits to fill up his regiments. "The militia of Texas," he said, "are so remote from the border that we can not depend upon their aid." There was in all this movement, establishment of depots, and encampment there on the left bank of the great river, considering the smallness of the force, a military boldness never surpassed by Thomas or Sherman during the war of the rebellion.

Mexico had now finally rejected the overtures of President Polk, and our Minister, bearing his dispatches, had, March 21, 1846, received his passports at the Mexican capital, and immediately returned to the United States. General Ampudia reached Matamoras April 11th, and his conduct showed to both friends and foes that at last the Mexican administration had agreed upon a positive plan of action. The next day, April 12th, he addressed General Taylor one of those graceful letters which, whether friendly or

Digitized by Google

hostile, gives evidence of the beauty and completeness of the Spanish language—to wit: "*God and Liberty!* . . . Your Government in an incredible manner—you will permit me to say, an extravagant one, if the usages, or general rules, established and received among civilized nations are regarded—has not only insulted, but has exasperated the Mexican nation, bearing its conquering banner to the left bank of the Rio Bravo del Norte; and in this case, by explicit and definite orders of my Government, which neither can, will, nor should receive new outrages, I require you in all force, and at latest in the peremptory term of twenty-four hours, to break up your camp and retire to the other bank of the Nueces River, while our Governments are regulating the pending questions in relation to Texas. If you insist upon remaining upon the soil of the Department of Tamaulipas, it will clearly result that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question; and in that case I advise you that we accept the war to which, with so much injustice on your part, you provoke us, and that, on our part, this war shall be conducted conformably to the principles established by the most civilized nations; that is to say, that the law of nations and of war shall be the guide of my operations, trusting that on your part the same will be observed. With this view, I tender you the consideration due your person and respectable office."

A part of General Taylor's reply has been used in another connection. He further spoke, in his rejoinder, of our Government's desire for a peaceful settlement, and of the repudiated United States Envoy to the City of Mexico; of his own army's carefully abstaining from any acts of hostility, and of his

Digitized by Google

hitherto adhering to "the plain dictates of justice and of humanity." He adds: "The instructions under which I am acting will not permit me to retrograde from the position I now occupy. In view of the relations between our respective Governments, I regret the alternative which you offer; but, at the same time, wish it understood that I shall by no means avoid such alternative, leaving the responsibility with those who rashly commence hostilities." Thus plainly did General Pedro de Ampudia lay down the gauge of battle, and as plainly and formally did General Taylor take up the same.

General Ampudia had the chief command of the Mexicans near the Rio Grande but a few days. Of course, General Taylor now apprehended a speedy attack. He strengthened his fort; he watched the river-crossings; and, on hearing of the approach of a Mexican vessel to the mouth of the river with supplies for Ampudia, he at once established a blockade, the revenue cutter and the steamer Lawrence holding the entrance to the Rio Grande. Against this blockading Ampudia was, April 19th, loud in his protestation. He says to General Taylor: "You have taken possession of these provisions by force, and against the will of the proprietors (one a Spaniard and the other an Englishman). . . . Nothing can have authorized you in such a course. The commerce of nations is not suspended or interrupted, except in consequence of a solemn declaration of blockade, communicated and established in form prescribed by international law, etc. . . ." He complained also that two Mexican citizens making their way down the river were fired upon and detained.

In his reply General Taylor showed clearly enough

868415A

that he and his army had been treated as an enemy ever since he had crossed the Colorado; that the alternative of war had been given by General Ampudia himself and accepted—the blockade was "a proceeding perfectly consonant with the state of war so often (by the Mexicans) already declared to exist." He referred also to the killing of Colonel Trueman Cross, the chief quartermaster of his army, a few days before by the *rancheros*. He, of course, detained two Mexican messengers sent to his [Ampudia's] vessels with information.

The dignified style of General Taylor is manifest in the closing of his message to this Mexican officer, who, notwithstanding former courtesy and ample promise, yet, in his great vexation at being outgeneraled by the quasi-blockade, once or twice used the harshest terms in his correspondence. General Taylor remarked: "In conclusion, I take leave to state that I consider the tone of your communication highly exceptionable where you stigmatize the movement of the army under my orders as 'marked with the seal of universal reprobation.' You must be aware that such language is not respectful in itself, either to me or my Government; and while I observe in my own correspondence the courtesy due to your high position, and to the magnitude of the interests with which we are respectively charged, I shall expect the same in return." A few days after this *contretemps* General Arista arrived (April 24, 1846) at Matamoras and took the supreme command of the Mexican army, Division of the North.

We pause in the chronological order of this narrative to speak a word concerning Colonel Cross, probably the first victim of the Mexican War. On April

Digitized by Google

9th—that is, twenty days after the army encamped opposite Matamoras—Colonel Trueman Cross, the assistant quartermaster-general, with his son, yet but a lad, took a ride beyond the limits of the camp. The little lad, probably being weary from too much reconnoitring, after a time made for the camp, coming in without Colonel Cross. When much time had elapsed and the colonel did not return, the trails were followed, the bushes and swamps and thickets were searched far and wide. But, as he could not be found, the notion at last prevailed that he, like the two imprisoned dragoons, which General Mejia afterward gave up, had been captured. The Mexican general, Ampudia, was corresponded with, but all in vain. As some officers had surmised, at the end of two weeks from his disappearance it was made apparent that the cruel *rancheros* had murdered and robbed him not long after he had parted with his child. His mutilated remains, found among the *chaparral*, were brought in and buried with the honors of war due to his rank. General Taylor's order for interment speaks feelingly: "The high rank of the deceased, and the ability and energy which he carried into the discharge of important duties of his office, will cause his loss to be seriously felt in the service, while the untoward circumstances of his demise will render it peculiarly affecting to his family and personal friends."

Colonel Cross was the first sacrifice that General Taylor had to suffer; the second was of a piece with the first. Lieutenant Theodoric Henry Porter, of the Fourth Infantry, had been sent out with a detachment of twelve men to make a reconnoissance—an entire regiment was kept at the time picketing

Digitized by Google

the left bank of the Rio Grande up and down a mile or more each way. A party of Mexicans, probably those same *rancheros* (Mexican Cossacks), during the third day of his scout met him and attacked; the lieutenant and three men were undoubtedly killed; the remainder of his detachment succeeded in reaching the army. Neither Lieutenant Porter nor the others missing could ever be found, though the vicinity of the encounter was visited in force the next day.

It is now easy to conceive the situation of affairs when General Arista had brought up his re-enforcements to Matamoras. He probably had, of all arms, a little upward of six thousand effectives. After the briefest study of the situation he resolved to take the offensive. His plan was to feign a crossing of the Rio Grande above General Taylor's camp and works, but to make the principal crossing below, throw his main force upon Taylor's line of supply, stand on the defensive, if possible, against Taylor himself till he had broken the blockade and captured Point Isabel, and then exert all his strength to defeat, destroy, or capture the entire American force.

The intention of Arista to cross was quickly known to General Taylor. On the day after Arista took command, Captain Seth B. Thornton, of the dragoons, was sent by Taylor with a squadron to reconnoiter the river above, and Captain Croghan Ker, with another squadron, below. A Mexican prisoner from Matamoras was taken by Thornton as a guide. General Torrejon watched Thornton's squadron of sixty souls as it worked its way westerly through the *chaparral*. About twenty-five or twenty-six miles from camp the Mexican commander, with ten times

Digitized by Google

the number of Thornton's party, having already crossed the Rio Grande, sprung his ambush and succeeded in bringing the dragoons to bay, though Captain Thornton himself on his horse leaped a hindering barricade, and might have escaped but for a subsequent untimely fall of his horse.

Lieutenant George T. Mason was killed in the affair and nine dragoons were slain. The remainder, including Captains Thornton and Hardee, and Lieutenant Kane, surrendered to General Torrejon as prisoners of war. Captain Ker was more wary than his comrades, or rather, perhaps, the main crossing which he discovered was less developed. He at least found no considerable enemy north of the river, and returned with his report. An affair timed like that of Thornton's squadron is very depressing to a commander. One can sympathize with those blunt words of General Taylor as he finished up his budget of dispatches: "P. S.—Since writing the above an engagement has taken place between a detachment of our cavalry and the Mexicans, in which we are worsted. So the war has actually commenced and the hardest must fend off."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

PALO ALTO.

The defense of Fort Brown—Its garrison—The move to Point Isabel—Arista's dispositions—He takes the offensive—Taylor's work at Point Isabel—His march—His meeting Arista in battle—The lines of both—The different attacks and how met—The end of the day—The council—The results of the day.

AFTER putting Fort Brown in as good a state of defense as possible and manning it with Captain Allen Lowd's and Lieutenant Braxton Bragg's batteries of artillery and the Seventh Infantry, six hundred strong, General Taylor immediately made an excellent strategic movement with his main body. To prevent the possibility of being cut off from his small reserve, then at Point Isabel, and from what was more important, his safe depot of supplies, he concluded to drop back eastward with his main force to that point. He knew very well that General Arista, who was crossing the Rio Grande in force, would regard his movement as a retreat, and that he [Arista] would endeavor first to clear up Fort Brown. Taylor doubtless hoped that his enemy would meet at the hands of the commander of the new fortress a determined, persistent resistance, so that whenever General Taylor felt ready he could turn upon Arista, and fall upon his rear unless Arista should divide his

Digitized by Google

force, leaving a part to deal with Fort Brown while bringing the remainder to encounter him. This last is precisely what the Mexican general did.

Again, General Taylor had called upon the President for re-enforcements, and was, though without much hope, looking for them. He knew that his enemy had in the neighborhood of two to one against him, and Taylor's re-enforcements would come by water to Point Isabel. Strategically the movement, in retreat, though it gave a sudden joyous impulse to the enemy with false hopes, was, in fact, a wise one. At the end of five days the Mexicans were still thundering away against the beleaguered fortress. No doubt, in spite of his sturdiness, General Taylor could not help being very solicitous.

He remained at Point Isabel long enough to rearrange the defense there, accumulate supplies, and prepare a train for his sub-depot at the front. On the evening of May 7 he started out with his little army, about three thousand strong, escorting at least three hundred wagons. One curious and most useful section of his column when on the road appeared in ten yoke of oxen drawing siege carriages, upon which were mounted two eighteen-pounders.* True enough, he had but a small force; besides his batteries and footmen, only a little over two hundred cavalrymen to clear his front and guard his flanks, yet there was a sprinkling of artillery and his four regiments of superb infantry; and though the officers were for the most part of junior rank, yet it was the material from which first-class commanders always spring.

* The remainder of Taylor's artillery was, fortunately, fairly supplied with good American horses.

Digitized by Google

Colonel David E. Twiggs was designated to command the right and Colonel William G. Belknap the left wing. The dashing Captain Charles A. May was the senior officer on duty with the two squadrons of dragoons. Ringgold's and Duncan's batteries of light artillery, accompanied by the four regiments of infantry, lengthened out the column. Small as this diminutive army appeared, yet, considering its discipline and drill, the courage and ability of its several commanders, and, in fact, the pluck and energy of all its commissioned officers, never forgetting the wariness, watchfulness, and unflinching character of its senior commander, might well make an army even better organized or larger than that of the Mexican general, Arista, anxious for its safety.

Behold this little force as it stretched itself upon the road from Point Isabel toward Matamoras! How fearless; how cheery; how confident! When Taylor had gone perhaps eight miles, he bivouacked for the night. At dawn of May 8 the column moved out of camp and pursued its steady tramp till about mid-day. While he was considering the subject of a noon rest, some scouts discovered the Mexicans apparently in force along the line of his horizon southward. This news gave only animation to General Taylor himself, and an instant hope that he might there bring his enemy to battle. The troops, soon partaking of his feeling, forgot their weariness and pressed forward more rapidly.

The moment it was plain that Arista had halted and was forming a battle line, General Taylor also checked his advance and brought up his main body as rapidly as possible. There was a small lake or water-hole near the road on which the American

Digitized by Google

troops were marching. Near here the American chief gathered his command into masses, giving them an hour's rest. It is a matter of no little interest to observe how General Taylor assured himself of the position, the distribution, and the apparent intention of the Mexican forces.

In those days the Topographical Engineers still had their comparatively independent existence. Lieutenant Jacob E. Blake, of that corps, approached the general and offered his services to reconnoiter. With permission he rode out boldly to points within two hundred yards of the enemy's position and along his front. His careful observation from point to point found the enemy's left resting against a swamp large and impassable, near which were clumps of *chaparral.* In the *chaparral* Arista had placed a considerable body of cavalry. Lieutenant Blake found at least two batteries of artillery on the right of the cavalry or in the intervals of the line. The enemy's infantry was at the time held in a line of masses, with still another column or mass of cavalry, probably one thousand strong, guarding the extreme right flank. Near this flank was a gentle rise in the prairie that made it look like a hill or knoll, covered with the usual growth of small trees which we find all along the sea-coast of the South.*

Notwithstanding the impassable nature of the marshy places, General Taylor, noticing Arista's excess of cavalry on his left, at once considered this

* The spring of 1846 was unusual for its rains in the Rio Grande Valley, and the small swales or *resacas* and depressions of the prairie were full of water.

Digitized by Google

portion of the enemy's line to be a weak one, so he arranged his own lines accordingly, putting great strength into his own right flank. He sought no special covering for his men, as he expected—let the cost be what it might—to take a prompt offensive. He had Colonel Twiggs arrange the right wing as follows: The Fifth Infantry and Ringgold's artillery on the right of the road extending somewhat beyond the enemy's flank, with room enough promptly to form a line of battle; then the two eighteen-pounders, under Lieutenant William H. Churchill, substantially following the road supported by the Third Infantry, Captain Lewis N. Morris. Next to the Third, leftward, came the Fourth Infantry, Major George W. Allen. One squadron of dragoons, under Captain May, watched the right, while the other squadron, under Captain Croghan Ker, guarded the trains that had come up and been parked near the water. The left wing, Belknap's, had for its right, first, a battalion of artillery acting as infantry near the center of the line, under Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Childs; next, leftward, Duncan's light battery; and then, opposite the enemy's extreme right, the Eighth Infantry, commanded by Captain William R. Montgomery. Captain Ker, of the dragoons, seems to have had a double office during this memorable day, not only covering the train, but having his eye constantly upon the left flank of the whole American line, and watching against any possible movement of the enemy's cavalry in that direction.

Such are the positions of the two forces so soon to be engaged in battle at Palo Alto.

General Taylor's own description of the combat itself, which has considerable detail, coming from

Digitized by Google

one who saw the battle with all the intense emphasis of such an occasion, is better than any other account of the event. He says, speaking of the enemy's batteries between Arista's cavalry and infantry: "These batteries were opened upon us, when I ordered the columns halted and deployed into line, and the fire to be returned by all our artillery. The Eighth Infantry, on our extreme left, was thrown back to secure the flank. The first fires of the enemy did but little execution, while our eighteen-pounders and Major Ringgold's artillery soon dispersed the cavalry which formed his [Arista's] left. Captain Duncan's battery, thrown forward in advance of the line, was doing good execution at this time. Captain May's squadron was now detached to support that battery and the left of our position." This movement took all the cavalry for Taylor's left and rear. He continues: "The Mexican cavalry, with two pieces of artillery, were now reported to be moving through the *chaparral* to our right to threaten that flank, or make a demonstration against the train. The Fifth Infantry was immediately detached to check this movement, and, supported by Lieutenant Ridgely, with a section of Major Ringgold's battery and Captain Walker's company of volunteers, effectually repulsed the enemy, the Fifth Infantry repelling a charge of lancers by promptly forming, like Wellington's regiments at Waterloo, the moving square, and, not only firing, but using the bayonet along the threatened fronts, and the artillery doing great execution in their ranks. The Third Infantry was now detached to the right as a still further security to that flank yet threatened by the enemy. Major Ringgold, with the remaining section,

Digitized by Google

kept up his fire from an advanced position and was supported by the Fourth Infantry."

It is presumed that Ringgold saw better ground before him, for, after leaving Ridgely, he pushed boldly ahead till his shots would tell and then fired rapidly. "The grass of the prairie had been accidentally fired by our artillery, and the volumes of smoke now partially concealed the armies from each other. As the enemy's left (near the marshy swale) had evidently been driven back, and left the road free, the cannonade having been suspended, I ordered forward the eighteen-pounders on the road nearly to the position first occupied by the Mexican cavalry, and caused the First brigade to take up a new position still, on the left of the eighteen-pounder battery. The Fifth was advanced from its former position, and it occupied a point on the extreme right of the new line. The enemy made a change of position corresponding to our own, and after a suspension of nearly an hour the action was resumed."

This action, from the new line, is like another battle: "The fire of artillery was now most destructive. Openings were constantly made through the enemy's ranks by our fire, and the constancy with which the Mexican infantry sustained severe cannonade was a theme of universal remark and admiration. Captain May's squadron was detached to make a demonstration on the left of the enemy's position, and suffered severely from the fire of artillery to which it was for some time exposed.

"The Fourth Infantry, which had been ordered to support the eighteen-pounder battery, was exposed to a most galling fire of artillery, by which several men were killed, and Captain Page dangerously

Digitized by Google

wounded. The enemy's fire was directed against our eighteen-pounder battery, and the guns under Major Ringgold in its vicinity. The major himself, while coolly directing the fire of his pieces, was struck by a cannon-ball and mortally wounded.

"Meanwhile the battalion of artillery (used as infantry), under Lieutenant-Colonel Childs, had been brought up to support the artillery on our right. A strong demonstration of cavalry was now made by the enemy against this part of our line and the (enemy's) column continued to advance under (against) a severe fire from the eighteen-pounders. The battalion was instantly formed in square, and held ready to receive the charge of cavalry; but when the advancing squadrons were within close range a deadly fire of canister from the eighteen-pounders dispersed them. A brisk fire of small arms was now opened upon the square, by which one officer, Lieutenant Luther, Second Artillery, was slightly wounded; but a well-directed volley from the front of the square silenced all further firing from the enemy in this quarter. It was now nearly dark, and the action was closed on the right of our line, the enemy having been completely driven back from his position, and failed in every attempt against our line.

"While the above was going on on our right, and under my own eye, the enemy had made a serious attempt against the left of our line. Captain Duncan instantly perceived the movement, and, by the bold and brilliant manœuvring of his battery, completely repulsed several successive efforts of the enemy to advance in force upon our left flank. Supported in succession by the Eighth Infantry and

Digitized by Google

Captain Ker's squadron of dragoons, he gallantly held the enemy at bay, and finally drove him, with immense loss, from the field. The action here and upon the whole line continued until dark, when the enemy retired into the *chaparral* in rear of his position. Our army bivouacked on the ground it occupied. During the afternoon the train had been moved forward about half a mile, and was parked in rear of the new position.

"Our loss this day was 9 killed, 44 wounded, and 2 missing"—certainly a remarkable showing for a battle so long continued. "Our own force is shown by the field report to have been 177 officers and 2,111 men—aggregate 2,288.

"The Mexican force, according to the statement of their own officers, was not less than 6,000 regular troops, with 10 pieces of artillery, and probably exceeded that number; the irregular force not known. Their loss was not less than 200 killed and 400 wounded; probably greater. This estimate is very moderate, and founded upon the number actually counted upon the field and upon the reports of their own officers.

"As already reported in my first brief dispatch, the conduct of our own officers and men was everything that could be desired. Exposed for hours to the severest trial — cannonade of artillery — our troops displayed a coolness and constancy which gave me throughout the assurance of victory."

Strange to record, the Mexican general, Arista, at the close of this affair uses these words in his dispatches: "And night coming on, the battle was concluded, the field remaining for our arms." As Taylor's men slept where they fought, and as Arista

Digitized by Google

had lost his first position altogether, his statement is misleading. Probably a part did remain on the last bloody field till the dawn of the 9th of April. The Americans, though worn out as they were by the prolonged struggle, never for an instant doubted their victory. The historian, J. Reese Fry, condoling with the splendid army of Arista, philosophically accounts for his surprising defeat as follows: "The want of impetuous, self-abandoning, indomitable bravery in his officers affords the only explanation. Their men sustained the destructive volleys of our guns with noble firmness, and had they been led on by superiors worthy of them, they might have more nearly balanced the fortunes of the day, even if they had failed to overpower their adversaries, who entered the field reckless of any opposing force, and resolved to maintain it [the field] at any cost."

This last clause shows that General Zachary Taylor had been long enough with his little army to infuse into their minds and hearts his own strong, steady, self-reliant, unselfish spirit. True, it was not a great battle, but it was a great beginning; and so the nation, thrilled with the news of this first victory, greatly applauded General Taylor and his conquering troops.

Point Isabel, the depot and place of departure of General Taylor the day before "Palo Alto," where he connected with the harbor and the sea, afforded a quiet offing for the navy and the supply transports. The highest point of the landing had been crowned with a regular bastioned redoubt, which was defended by a small garrison; so that the wounded were sent thither at once to a safe, well-supplied hospital, and also crippled wagons and carriages to the temporary

Digitized by Google

shops for repairs. Meanwhile busy commissaries and ordnance men were from there hastening forward food and ammunition, preparatory to another trial of arms. As the mind rests upon the unwonted boldness of Taylor's movement it can not fail, after looking in upon the charming sheltered nook of Point Isabel, so complete a citadel of refuge, to feel the force of his carefulness, which would have made of even a defeat to himself only a temporary repulse.

This battle, the more we study it, appears to have been mainly a battle of artillery. In this arm, considering the fine horses, the thorough drill, and the quick manœuvring, Taylor was superior to the Mexicans. True, the eighteen-pounders, as with the Mexican artillery, were drawn by oxen, but in this one battery the range of the guns was greater than any that Arista could bring against them. The prompt and successful use of the squares indicates a very thorough drill on the part of the infantry and the artillery men that acted as infantry. As General Taylor called some of his leading officers into council the following morning, we have a record of the misgivings and fears of a few lest the enemy might take the offensive. They gave the usual conservative advice. But the old general, having heard them courteously, spoke but a single sentence: "Go to your respective commands; we move forward in thirty minutes."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

Resaca de la Palma—The appearance of the region—Taylor's anxiety for Fort Brown—Details of the decisive battle—Artillery resistance—May's celebrated charge—General Taylor's story of the conflict—The after-battle—His tenderness toward the wounded—A brief summary—Texas secured to the Rio Grande.

LIKE the soldiers of 1861, at Fair Oaks, the night of the 8th of April, 1846, the soldiers of both armies lay down not far apart, and there was doubtless a determination on both sides, after a brief respite, to renew the struggle on the next, the morning of the 9th. There was everywhere an apparent readiness. The cavalrymen's horses were unsaddled, being held by the lariats while they fed. Certainly the guards were over-weary; but the fear of a possible night-alarm had kept the numerous sentinels on the alert. Yet the bulk of Taylor's small army slept soundly after Palo Alto, and, on awaking, the soldiers showed no reluctance at the prospect of an advance.

It was just the time of year for the finest weather, and that day, April 9th, the sun rose without a cloud. The officers saw that men and animals had their morning meal. There was no hurry, no nervous, spasmodic haste in the United States army. When certain officers around him would have him wait for re-enforcements, General Taylor, thinking of his faith-

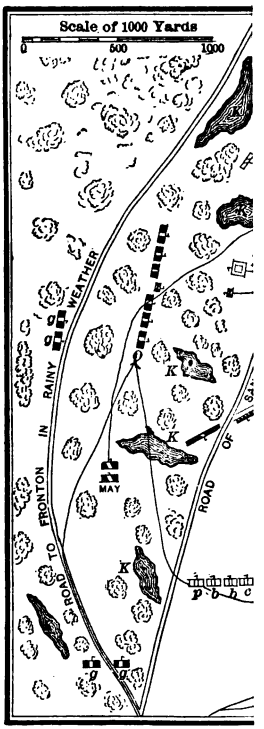
Digitized by Google

ful commander, Captain Brown, with his little garrison so long besieged opposite Matamoras, and of the risk to his own army of wasting even one day in that exposed situation, declared his resolve with emphasis: "I will be at Fort Brown to-night if I live!" Then slowly the general began his advance from his right, along and near the road. At the marshy swale and neighboring thickets, before described, he halted, as he saw a few hostiles in the distance, and deployed the usual line of skirmishers. He sent out Ker's squadron to reconnoiter, for only a few of the enemy's cavalry were then in view, and those in the edge of an extensive *chaparral*, nearly half a mile away in a southwesterly direction.

With some difficulty Captain Ker, supported by the steady advance of some other chosen troops under Captain George A. McCall, came near enough to discover Arista's new position. He and McCall sent back three dragoons, and they reported to General Taylor that it was next to impossible to dislodge the enemy, for Arista was holding the "Palm Ravine"—i. e., *Resaca de la Palma*—and his artillery swept the road.

The whole sweep of country in that direction is a slightly rolling, comparatively level tract. The high ground of Palo Alto, where Arista had rested his right flank, was a long knoll or slight elevation of perhaps twenty or thirty feet at the highest points. The *chaparral*, clumps of scrub trees, and bunches of thickets, mingled here and there with clusters of the prickly pear, the tops of the trees high enough and dense enough to conceal fairly well even the mounted men, was, on the first field, only in groves and scattered groupings. When General Taylor had

Digitized by Google



Field covered with high gra
Regiment, a battalion; *E*, First
talion; *H*, Battalion of Sappers
Light Regiment, cavalry, two s
second charge of the cavalry; *
cavalry reformed when it rallie
Y, *Y*, line burned by the Ameri
tion; *K*, small ravine.

TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R
L

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

passed the marshy swale there was before him a stretch of open prairie, almost treeless, some half mile or more in breadth; then began what he called "the forest," a *chaparral* growth denser than such as we have described, a few miles across, upon a measurably rough, sandy-bottom terrain. It extended up and down the Resaca for some miles.

While the general remained halted, Captains Mackall and Ker, followed by Walker's Texas Rangers with a hundred or more picked men, made their way cautiously through the numerous paths and along the main Matamoras road, running southerly, till they came to the edge of an open space. The first troops that appeared in sight received a shot from the Mexican battery on the other side of what some called "the prairie."

Conceive of this "prairie," a small opening like a forest-glade, intersected by a ravine ten or twelve feet in depth and about two hundred feet wide, at an oblique angle to the main avenue of approach, which is, here, the north and south road. The forest thicket, interrupted by the small "prairie," began again close on the south bank of the ravine. The cut for the wagon-road through the banks made "the pass' of the Resaca. This cross ravine was long enough to enable General Arista to post his front line under good cover. It was a good position for a small division of six thousand against an advancing brigade of less than three thousand—a natural fort.

General Arista, hardly acknowledging his defeat of the previous day, and much chagrined at his want of success, did not hasten his march to his new ground. By ten o'clock he had made the five intervening miles and planted his forces with great care.

Digitized by Google

Being but three miles from the crossing of the Rio Grande, near Fort Brown, he had already received sufficient re-enforcements to replace the losses at Palo Alto, and so had for the coming contest, as before, about six thousand men.

He arranged, facing northward behind the edge of the ravine, a line of soldiers covered to their breasts when standing by the natural rise of the ground; this line consisted of the Sixth and Tenth Regular Infantry, the sappers and miners, the Second Light Infantry, and the First Infantry Regulars, on his right of the road, that is, eastward; then, in *echelon*, in rear of the ravine, on the left of the road, westward, the Second Mexican Infantry, the Costa Guards and the Tampico company, and the Fourth Infantry; still farther to the rear, as a reserve, or prepared to cover the flanks of those in front, the Presidentials; extending the group, the light cavalry, and the Seventh and Eighth Regiments of heavy cavalry.

For the artillery, a three-gun battery was arranged and covered with light epaulements near the southern *débouché* from the ravine, and so placed as to sweep the road of approach and the vicinity with its fire; another work, with one cannon, near the middle of his left wing. Two other batteries, with two guns each, were so located as to bring a concentrated fire upon any column emerging upon the little prairie beyond them. Arista shielded his entire front with a skirmish line of his sharp-shooters, extending them into the thick *chaparral* to the right and left of the opening. Surely no government or critic could censure these dispositions against so small odds as Taylor's army.

Digitized by Google

Nothing better shows the strong confidence that General Taylor had in his men, himself, and in the God of battles, than his preliminary work. He had, as we said, sent his wounded of Palo Alto under escort to Point Isabel; he then had detached the artillery battalion, except the flank companies, to remain in reserve and protect his trains in park near the late battle-ground, and also left there the two eighteen-pounders and the two twelve-pounders which had not yet been used. Thus depleted, he set forth with but a little over two thousand men, hoping to fight another battle, and one on which hung the fate of Fort Brown and the issue of the campaign.

Again General Taylor may tell the story. He, a few days after the affair, wrote: "About three o'clock I received a report from the advance (to wit: the light companies of the First Brigade, under Captain Charles F. Smith, and some other companies of select infantry with Ker's squadron of cavalry, all commanded by Captain McCall, of the Fourth Infantry) that the enemy was in position on the road with at least two pieces of artillery. The command was immediately put in motion, and at about four o'clock I came up with Captain Mackall, who reported the enemy in force in our front, occupying a ravine which intersects the road and is skirted by thickets of dense *chaparral.* Ridgely's battery (which had come up at a rapid pace) and the advance under Captain Mackall were at once thrown forward on the road and into the *chaparral* on either side, while the Fifth Infantry and one wing of the Fourth were thrown into the forest on the left; and the Third (Infantry) and the other wing of the Fourth on the right of the road. These corps were

Digitized by Google

employed as skirmishers to cover the battery (Ridgely's) and to engage the Mexican infantry." This was equivalent to our habit in later years of doubling the skirmish line and pressing forward.

"Captain Mackall's command became at once engaged with the enemy, while our light artillery, though in a very exposed position, did great execution. The enemy had at least eight pieces of artillery, and maintained an incessant fire upon our advance. The action now became general; and although the enemy's infantry gave way before the steady fire and resistless progress of our own, yet his artillery was still in position to check our advance, several pieces occupying the pass across the ravine which he had chosen for his position.

"Perceiving that no decisive advantage could be gained until this artillery was silenced, I ordered Captain May to charge the batteries with his squadron of dragoons." [Indeed, it was a hard thing to do in such a place.] "This was gallantly and effectually executed; the enemy was driven from his guns, and General La Vega, who remained alone at one of the batteries, was taken prisoner. The squadron, which suffered much in this charge, not being immediately supported by infantry, could not retain possession of the artillery taken, but it was completely silenced.

"In the mean time the Eighth Infantry had been ordered up and had become warmly engaged on the right of the road. This regiment and part of the Fifth were now" [following up May's movement] "ordered to charge the batteries, which was handsomely done, and the enemy driven from his artillery and (from) his position on the left (east) of the road.

Digitized by Google

"The light companies of the First Brigade and the Third and Fourth Regiments of infantry had been deployed on the right of the road, where at various points they became briskly engaged with the enemy. A small party under Captain Robert C. Buchanan and Lieutenants Wood and Hays, Fourth Infantry, composed chiefly of men of that regiment, drove the enemy from a breastwork which he occupied (that one farthest from the road) and captured a piece of artillery. An attempt to recover this piece was repelled by Captain Barbour, Third Infantry.

"The enemy was at last completely driven from his position on the right of the road and retreated precipitately, leaving baggage of every description. The Fourth Infantry took possession of a camp where the headquarters of the general-in-chief [Arista] were established. All his official correspondence was captured at this place.

"The (artillery) battalion was now ordered up (from the park of wagons) to pursue the enemy; and this, with the Third Infantry, Captain Ker's dragoons, and Captain Duncan's battery, followed him rapidly to the river, making a number of prisoners. Great numbers of the enemy were drowned in attempting to cross the river near the town. The corps last mentioned—i. e., the pursuing force—encamped near the river; the remainder of the army on the field of battle.

"The actual number (of the aggregate, 2,222) engaged with the enemy did not exceed 1,700. Our loss was three officers killed and twelve wounded, thirty-six men killed and seventy-one wounded. Among the officers killed I have to regret the loss of Lieutenant Inge, Second Dragoons, who fell at the

Digitized by Google

head of his platoon while gallantly charging the enemy's battery; of Lieutenant Cochrane, of the Fourth Infantry, and Lieutenant Chadbourn, of the Eighth Infantry, who likewise met their death in the thickest of the fight."

General Taylor mentions as wounded Lieutenant-Colonels Matthew M. Payne and James S. McIntosh; Captains A. S. Hooe and William R. Montgomery; Lieutenants Stephen D. Dobbins, S. H. Fowler, C. R. Gates, Charles D. Jordan, Joseph Seldon, Robert P. Maclay, John G. Burbank, and Charles F. Morris. General Taylor adds: "The enemy's loss was very great. Nearly two hundred of his dead were buried by us on the day succeeding the battle. His loss in killed, wounded, and missing, in the two affairs of the 8th and 9th (April), is, I think, moderately estimated at one thousand men."

The historian (Fry) has given a vivid picture of the after-battle which is most affecting He says: "If the carnage among the Mexicans on the 8th (April) excited the pity even of their enemies, that of the 9th must have appealed still more to their sympathies. The evening closed on hundreds of them wounded, dying and dead, upon the field and on the road to the river. In the panic of flight, self-preservation was the single thought of each individual. The bleeding and the exhausted were borne down and forsaken by the sound and the strong. The parties on foot were trampled by the cavalry; and none of the multitude fleeing from the foe found aid or comfort from their friends. The thickets and the hollows, distant from the scene of strife, long afterward told the story of many a wounded soldier who had struggled on to some secluded spot, there

Digitized by Google

to linger, to thirst, to hunger, to faint, to bleed, to perish, alone in his long and varied agony."

General Taylor, however, after his own hard duty in battle had been done, was always most compassionate. He made no distinction of friends and enemies in his provisions for the wounded. When he found himself short of help, he sent across the river for Mexican surgeons to come to the relief of his own weary workers. The next day, the 10th of April, the burial parties were sent out to gather up those who had been slain; friend and foe, here too, were served alike and received a soldier's burial. When brought together they all received "the honors of war" before being finally laid to rest.

The part played by the little garrison at Fort Brown has already been alluded to. General Taylor's anxiety for this fortified place and the troops that had been exposed to overwhelming odds against them was now relieved. Yet his brief dispatch concerning it is a sad one—indeed, no war victory is ever cloudless. He wrote at ten o'clock on the night of Resaca:

"It affords me pleasure to report that the field-work opposite Matamoros had sustained itself handsomely during a cannonade and bombardment of one hundred and sixty hours. But the pleasure is alloyed with profound regret at the loss of its heroic and immediate commander, Major Jacob Brown, who died to-day from the effects of a shell. His loss would be a severe one to the service at any time, but to the army under my orders it is deemed irreparable."

The list of property captured exhibits features of General Taylor's great victory. Very nearly all that had been brought into the field or been used in camp

Digitized by Google

had fallen into his hands. Plate and private property, "correspondence of their general-in-chief, the arms, ammunition, standards, provisions, pack-saddles, and every equipment of seven thousand men and two thousand horses," excepting, of course, what many individuals carried off upon their persons. A defeat and a panic strip the loser of nearly all that he possesses.

That brief campaign had done a great work. It had cleared Texas forever from Mexican control. It had established the Rio Grande as the permanent boundary between the two nations—the United States and Mexico—and it had gained a prestige for our arms that the world has never forgotten. The name of Zachary Taylor at once became national, and his indomitable manhood has ever since strongly influenced every true soldier of the republic. They called him "Rough and Ready," and thousands of college boys translated the sobriquet into Latin, and *durus et semper paratus* became the classic motto for many a class signet and many a class badge throughout the land.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

Taylor's endowment — Reports — Exchange of prisoners — The *rancheros* again—Important visit to Point Isabel—Ringgold's and Blake's death—After-battle shadows—Words to La Vega—The taking of Barita and Lower Rio Grande—Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson's expedition—Bridges and launches—Arista's *ruse de guerre*—Crossing the Rio Grande in force—The drowning of Lieutenant George Stevens—Arista in full retreat—Arista's report—Contrast of Arista and Taylor, their equipoise and manners—Matamoros in 1892—Schools and public improvements evincing progress.

To carry on war successfully requires strong qualities—physically, mentally, and morally. Our great civil war demonstrated this fact to this generation, so that our childhood conceptions of a great warrior have been much modified. General Taylor had, indeed, a complete endowment in the requisite qualities, and such an endowment rendered him indefatigable. There was rest for his commanders after an unusual fatigue; rest for his soldiers after an arduous march, a series of battles, and an abundant triumph; but no rest for himself. Responsibility to his Government and to God pressed him; possibilities for his adversaries' recuperation and action crowded his thoughts and plans for the present and for the future of his own campaign. These would give him no vacation. Yet his physique was so superb that his digestion was never disturbed, and he

Digitized by Google

slept soundly whenever the call for exceeding watchfulness was over.

The next day after Resaca he completed his reports, gathered his army opposite Matamoros, buried the dead, and provided for the sick and wounded. On May 11th he arranged with General Arista an exchange of prisoners, so that Captains Thornton and Hardee, with their soldiers, appeared again among their comrades. Though there is occasional complaint, as we have noticed, in the annals concerning the cruelty of the *rancheros* and camp-followers, who stripped and mutilated the victims and were found killing wounded men and robbing the dead, yet, for humanity's sake, it is pleasant to listen to the report of our prisoners returning from Matamoros: "They treated us with courteous attention and kindness during our captivity."

Now, having put everything in order at the front, General Taylor, hearing that the combined military and naval force at his principal depot, Point Isabel, again demanded his immediate presence, placed Colonel Twiggs in command of his field army and went there at once. His letter, dated May 12th, at Point Isabel, Texas, to the adjutant-general of the army, is full of interest:

"Sir: I am making a hasty visit to this place for the purpose of having an interview with Commodore Conner, whose squadron is now at anchor off the harbor, and arranging with him a combined movement up the river (Rio Grande). The Mexican forces are almost disorganized, and I shall lose no time in investing Matamoros and opening the navigation of the river.

"I regret to report that Major Ringgold died the

Digitized by Google

morning of the 11th inst., of the severe wound in the action of Palo Alto. With the exception of Captain Page, whose wound is dangerous, the other wounded officers are doing well." After adding Lieutenant Dobbin, whose name by some accident he had before omitted, to his list of wounded officers, he goes on to say: "I am under the painful necessity of reporting that Lieutenant Blake, Topographical Engineers, after rendering distinguished services on my staff during the affair of the 8th inst., accidentally shot himself with a pistol on the following day, and expired before night. . . . General Vega and a few other officers have been sent to New Orleans, having declined a parole, and will be reported to Major-General Gaines. I am not conversant with the usages of war in such cases, and beg that such provision be made for these prisoners as may be authorized by law. Our own prisoners have been treated with great kindness by the Mexican officers."

The letter from which these extracts are made betrays the shadows of the severe battles through which his heroic spirit had just passed; but there is no self-assertion—no claim even to personal merit. It is the expression of a warm and tender heart. He thinks of the seriously wounded and of the dying; of the precious dead; of his enemy's virtues and of his prisoners' comfort. This thoughtful commander, like King David of old, did not forget those who had been forced to remain at the depot of supplies at Point Isabel. He named that fortified place "Fort Polk," to honor his own commander-in-chief. He published in orders his great satisfaction with the defense and protection of Point Isabel. "To Major John Monroe, the commanding officer; Captain San-

Digitized by Google

ders, of the Engineers; Majors Thomas and McRee, and Captains Sibley and Hill, of the Quartermaster's Department; Captain Ramsay, of the Ordnance; and Lieutenant Montgomery, of the Subsistence Departments, credit is especially due for their zeal and activity." He then thanks the citizen volunteers, and adds: "The re-enforcements from the brig Lawrence, under Lieutenant Renshaw, and the large force of seamen and marines so promptly furnished by the (naval) squadron on its arrival, require a special acknowledgment to Commodore Conner and Commander Mercer, of the navy. The army is deeply grateful for this support and co-operation from a kindred branch of the public service." In the same general line of kindly feeling and uniform courtesy may be mentioned the words reported to have been used to La Vega when this captured Mexican general was first brought to General Taylor: "General," he said, "I do assure you I deeply regret that this misfortune has fallen upon you. I regret it sincerely, and I take great pleasure in returning you the sword which you have this day worn with so much gallantry."

To return to the newly named fort. General Taylor and Commodore Conner had well arranged their co-operative plans not only for the proper defense of the fort and the harbor, but for the more complete opening and holding of the Rio Grande. This project was essential to secure what had been gained by the campaigns and battles to the east and north of that river. Then, leaving the Commodore to remain and begin his part of the plan, he—Taylor—was hastening to his army, when he met a messenger from Colonel Twiggs, telling him that the enemy

Digitized by Google

across the river already showed signs of recuperation. Re-enforcements were coming into Matamoros, and the Mexicans had begun to fortify Barita and other points near the mouth of the Rio Grande This was indeed a quick turn of affairs. Our general never hesitated; he could give move for move; blow for blow is the game of war. He at once retraced his steps. Fortunately, there had been an arrival of his long-looked-for re-enforcements, both volunteers and regulars.

A small detachment was immediately put in marching order, made up of three hundred and fifty Alabama and Louisiana volunteers and about three hundred of the regular army, and Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Wilson, of the First Infantry, was assigned to its command. Commodore Conner hastened a part of his squadron to ascend the Rio Grande, while Wilson's column marched straight across the country to Brazos. On their arrival the naval vessels promptly ferried the troops across to the right bank of the river, and Wilson pushed forward to Barita, and seized that town on May 17th. This, we understand, was General Taylor's first lodgment on that bank of the great river. Whatever might be the final boundary, this occupancy was necessary to secure his base of supplies. His foresight and promptitude doubtless saved him from another severe combat.

The general was already back at Fort Brown when Barita was captured, and getting ready to cross his army and take Matamoros. The critics ask: "Why did he not do so at once—the day after the battle of Resaca de la Palma?"

He needed two things that are often slow in

Digitized by Google

coming to the front: the one, a pontoon bridge or boats to cross that broad stream, that often taxes the utmost skill and energy to get over in unfavorable times; the other, the proper siege material—i. e., the mortars and their ammunition. These things had been among the first which the general had asked for; but for some unexplained reason they were not at the front and ready for use till May 17th, and then there was no bridge, only boats and launches, for crossing.

The shrewdness of General Arista now appears. The instant he saw that the American troops were ready to cross, and that a bombardment of the city was certain to take place, he dispatched a messenger of high rank with a flag of truce—General Raquena—to General Taylor, and begged for an armistice. This request Taylor at once refused. His first reason, that he himself had offered an armistice before the battles, which offer had not been entertained for one moment. He next mentioned his abundant re-enforcements. The possession of the city was indispensable to safety. He spoke of the mutilation and robbery of the dead on the part of the *rancheros*, and proposed to be where he could control them.

Another reason, which both parties well understood but did not speak of to each other, was, that Matamoros was a depot of supplies of all kinds. Taylor meant that the stores should not be carried off, and Arista hoped to get away a goodly portion before his evacuation of the place. So at last General Taylor made a positive demand for Matamoros, extending to General Arista good terms, to be obtained by a quick compliance. Raquena went back

Digitized by Google

to his chief, promising an answer by 3 P. M. of that day. All this negotiation was, however, only *ruse de guerre.* Arista was already making off, and manœuvred only to gain time while he put in motion the wagons with military stores. During the night of the 17th he took flight with what was left of his army, and was before the morning of the 18th so far on his route to Monterey that it would have been extremely difficult to have overtaken him. Before night of the 17th, the mortars being placed opposite the city, Colonel Twiggs had moved his force, in order to cross the Rio Grande, to a favorable point two miles above Fort Brown. The artillery, including those favorite eighteen-pounders, was so placed as to cover the landing on the west bank. All the boats and launches that could be collected were secured to the shore, and everything was ready, waiting the word.

On May 18th General Taylor, speaking of General Raquena's promised message, reports: "An answer to the above was promised in the afternoon, but none came; and I repaired at sundown to join the army, already in position at a crossing some two miles above the town. Very early this morning (the 18th) the bank was occupied by two eighteen-pounders and three batteries of field artillery, and the crossing commenced; the light companies of all the battalions were first thrown over, followed by the volunteer and regular cavalry. No resistance was made, and I was soon informed from various quarters that Arista had abandoned the town, with all his troops, the evening before, leaving only the sick and wounded. I immediately dispatched a staff officer to the prefect to demand a surrender; and in the

Digitized by Google

mean time a commission was sent by the prefect to confer with me on the same point. I gave assurance that the civil rights of the citizens would be respected, and our troops at once dropped down opposite the town and crossed at the 'upper ferry,' the American flag being displayed at Fort Paredes, a Mexican redoubt near the crossing.

"The different corps now encamped in the outskirts of the city . . . More than three hundred of the enemy's wounded have been left in the hospitals. Arista is in full retreat toward Monterey, with the fragments of his army. I deeply regret" (how often the regret!) "to report that Lieutenant George Stevens, a very promising young officer of the Second Dragoons, was accidentally drowned this morning while attempting to swim the river with his squadron."

Undoubtedly, however, there was soon great joy in the American camp. As the first crossing began, the boats steered along in groups, borne downward by the swift current, followed by platoons of troops on their horses swimming for dear life, the bands of music upon the east shore were playing the thrilling air of "Yankee Doodle."

Here again we behold the thoughtful and humane general. He protects the property and lives of the citizens. He appoints General Twiggs Governor; but, excepting the proper guards, he stations the troops outside of the city. He puts even his own headquarters in camp. Colonel Twiggs's wing is above, and General Worth, now back from a brief absence with his wing, below Matamoros. The Seventh Infantry is still left to garrison and hold Fort Brown.

Digitized by Google

Meanwhile General Arista was making his way over that thirsty land as fast as his impedimenta would allow him. Lieutenant-Colonel Garland, with the volunteer and regular cavalry, pushed out, May 19th, in pursuit, and marched as far as he dared over a barren waste—as far as his horses' strength permitted. He touched a remnant of Arista's rear guard, took a few prisoners, and then without much satisfaction returned to the Rio Grande with his half-famished command. The color which General Arista gives to his situation in a letter of the 18th is entertaining. He writes: "All the means of subsistence of this division being consumed, its activity paralyzed, and its artillery diminished, while that of the enemy greatly increased in the number of his pieces and the caliber of his guns in such a manner that, were he to open his fire, the city of Matamoros would be destroyed, to the utter ruin of national and foreign interests, I have decided to retire from it with the forces under my command before being summoned and obliged to evacuate it with dishonor, which I shall thus avoid; for the march is slow, our pieces being drawn by oxen, and our munitions in carts. My object now is to defend the soil of those departments which have been intrusted to me; and for that purpose I am going to post myself at those points most convenient and within reach of supplies, etc."

Probably, under all the circumstances then existing, Arista acted wisely. General Taylor, with a co-operating naval squadron, had already shut up the Rio Grande; he had made a firm lodgment upon the western bank of the river at Barita. Arista might possibly stop a near-at-hand crossing for a

Digitized by Google

time; but probably he could not do even that, considering the nature of the landing and the possibility of Taylor's covering it thoroughly with artillery, heavy and light; and certainly those terrible mortars, if opened, would utterly destroy the little city itself. Again, there is in Arista's words a half-expressed acknowledgment of a loss of *morale* among his troops. They had just been twice defeated under, to him, most favoring conditions. How could they now hold their own against an increase of numbers of these unconquerable fighters?

The primary and avowed object of the United States Government and of the Texans had now been fully secured; the Rio Grande was ours, and there was almost a barren desert of sixty or seventy miles westward and southward to aid the conquering army to keep what it had gained. General Taylor, having given the poor inhabitants a better and safer government than any they had probably ever before enjoyed, could afford to indulge himself in a few days of much-needed rest while he waited for further orders.

General Arista was a representative Mexican commander, and—may I say it?—General Taylor was a representative American officer. Arista's surroundings, even in the field and during his active campaign, and his methods of procedure, were in remarkable contrast to those of Taylor. Arista had for his own occupancy a large marquee, striped with different colors in its texture, giving expanse and brilliancy to his surroundings. Other tents were symmetrically located for effect in respect to the great marquee. Officials of every rank, obsequious in deportment, clustered around, displaying a variety of brilliant

Digitized by Google

uniform. Orderlies and personal staff officers were ready at all times in sight, with their horses saddled and equipped near at hand. The pack trains for the headquarters were numerous, and the *aparejos*, with all appertaining to them when on the ground, were arranged in squares and rectangles in the right or left rear of the central tents. If you glanced through the open front to the inside of Arista's compartments you saw tables laden with maps; chairs in plenty and settees; silver and other table furniture like that of a palace. In the midst of this luxury was General Arista, continually receiving from his officers official reports and acts of personal *obéissance*, which added to the picturesque display. Music of the bands, though not always of the best, brought in from the regiments, was never wanting during reception and official hours to keep up the bewildering effects. It was like the brilliant court of some mediæval prince. The distance from this general in command to the humble subordinate or to the common soldier, however brave and faithful, was too great to be estimated.

Behold the contrast between this brilliant Mexican officer and the plain man who commanded our army! A witness who visited the encampment of the army beyond the river gives a sketch pertaining to this time which speaks for itself: "About a mile above the city of Matamoros, a little distance from the bank of the Rio Grande, are to be seen (June 1, 1846) some stunted and ill-shaped trees which bend their gnarled and almost leafless limbs over a group of three or four small tents, only different from those of the common soldiers in this, that they are heterogeneously disposed for shade, instead of being

Digitized by Google

in a line, regardless of all else than military precision. The plain about is dotted over with thousands of tents, before many of which were pieces of artillery and groups of soldiers, and over some waved in triumphant folds our national flag, giving promise of more importance and pomp than the little knot to which we have particularly alluded. . . . We wound our way toward the dwarfish trees . . . that were distinguished from being a few feet higher than the surrounding brush, and for the little group of tents that rested beneath them; for they were pointed out as marking *the headquarters* of the commanding general of a triumphant American army. Not the slightest token was visible to mark one tent from another; there were no sentinels, or any military parade present; a chubby, sunburned child, belonging to the camp, was playing near by in the grass. . . . We presented ourselves at the opening of one of the tents, before which was standing a dragoon's horse much used by hard service. Upon a camp-stool at our left sat General ——, in busy conversation with a hearty-looking old gentleman sitting on a box (cushioned with an Arkansas blanket), dressed in Attakapas pantaloons and a linen roundabout, and remarkable for a bright, flashing eye, a high forehead, a farmer look, and 'rough-and-ready' appearance." Of course, this was General Zachary Taylor.

"There was no pomp about his tent. A couple of rough, blue chests served for his table, on which were strewn in masterly confusion a variety of official-looking documents. A quiet-looking, citizen-dressed personage made his appearance upon hearing the call of 'Ben,' bearing on a tin salver the usual re-

Digitized by Google

freshments. These refreshments were deposited upon a stool, and 'we helped ourselves' by invitation. We bore to the general a complimentary gift from some of his fellow-citizens of New Orleans, which he declined receiving for the present, giving at the same time a short but 'hard-sense' lecture on the impropriety of people naming children and places after men before they were dead; or of his receiving a reward for his services before the campaign, so far as he was concerned, was finished."

Matamoros is still a small city of about twenty-five thousand inhabitants. It has changed so little that even the places of encampment of Taylor's troops are traceable. Everything has the appearance of age. Pavements are rough, but kept clean. The old churches are, like all in Mexico, of venerable appearance, but presenting fine points in architectural effect, and well preserved without and within. A commodious opera-house and various school buildings are among the modern productions. The depot of the railroad, and the railroad itself, well furnished and in the best condition throughout, running from Matamoros to San Miguel—that is, within twenty-one miles of Camargo—is evidence of progress. As soon as this road has its proper and promised extension to Monterey, the lower Rio Grande Valley, rich in every production, will be thus connected with the City of Mexico and the outside world. Several excellent schools, fostered by the Mexican Government, are in existence in Matamoros. Some of them have exceptional educational advantages. So that, to-day, the visitor to this part of General Taylor's operations is made to feel that though there has been a small growth, even this part of the country,

Digitized by Google

remarkably shut in, which General Taylor was constrained to take, is making progress. The interest of General Lojero, the manly commandant and governor, and all connected with him, in carrying out the present policy of thorough tolerance in religion and complete protection to the schools, are harbingers of untold blessings to this people.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

Three months' rest of Taylor's army—Leaders of the Whig party looking to Taylor as candidate for the presidency—Extracts from letters relating thereto—Taylor brevetted Major-General—Given full rank a little later—Taylor's plans coincident with Scott's—Movement on Camargo begun—Taylor's popularity with his soldiers—His self-denial—Care for the sick on the steamer.

FROM the last of May to the last of August, full three months, the army of General Taylor to the people seemed to be idle. It certainly fought no battle and made no offensive movement likely to bring on one. Politicians attributed the delays to faults of the Executive. Taylor's letters, extracts being published, showed that there was something wanting. Soldiers who were lying in hospital wrote their own darkened version of affairs, and these were published by political opponents to the war and made much of. The various discontents that arose resulted in political reactions, so that the Whigs felt that the tide was setting against the party in power. Their shrewdest leaders, when canvassing, as usual, for the most available candidate for the next President, fixed their eyes upon General Taylor. For a time the sturdy old chief was greatly troubled by the multitude of soliciting letters that he received; and, indeed, he was in a position of embarrassment.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Polk's party was ardently pursuing the democratic policy, with the Southern States plainly in the lead General Taylor was at the front, the chief in command under President Polk as his own commander-in-chief, a representative of the democratic administration, and yet General Taylor was known to be a Whig The situation had the effect to make him exceedingly cautious. Extracts from his replies to political friends, or managers, will show how steadily and stoutly he avoided any partisan stand. A letter of July 21, 1846, has these expressions: "But it becomes me sincerely and frankly to acknowledge to you that for that office (the presidency) I have no aspiration whatever. Although no politician, having always held myself aloof from the clamors of party politics, I am a Whig, and shall ever be devoted to the principles of that party. Even if the subject which you have in your letter opened to me were acceptable at any time, I have not the leisure to attend to it now; the vigorous prosecution of the war with Mexico, so important to the interests of the country, demands every moment of my present time, and it is my great desire to bring it to a speedy and honorable termination."

How far-seeing he was! The vigorous prosecution of the war would undoubtedly bring honor and strength to the party in power, but there was something to be gained far beyond any partisan project or purpose. His nation, as a nation, though reluctantly drawn into the struggle, was in it too deeply to retire without disaster. The United States had accepted Texas as a State; the border-line had now been fixed and must be maintained unless civil negotiations and compromises should change it. Mexico had wanted

Digitized by Google

the war; had refused negotiation; had crossed the border and attacked the nation's army; and, though defeated in two battles and driven back to the river, still insisted on its claim to the whole of Texas. For the nation, independent of party, there was nothing now to be done except to push forward all the columns and compel a peace. So all men throughout the land believed and acted, the Whigs as well as the Democrats. The Whigs even strove to outdo the Democrats, and complained loudly at the delays that somebody was causing to General Taylor's superb and gallant army.

In another letter of later date Taylor, with brief emphasis, says: "In no case can I permit myself to be the candidate of any party, or yield myself to party schemes." Again: "Should I ever occupy the White House, it must be by the spontaneous move of the people, and by no act of mine, so that I could go into the office untrammeled, and be the chief magistrate of the nation and not of a party." This certainly is a high and honorable stand. It seems in all this correspondence as if the soul of Washington had found in Taylor a worthy successor—broad as the nation, unselfish in his devotion to duty, and with no other object or ambition except that he might contribute to the nation's honor. What a source of gratulation and thanksgiving that God has ever given us such leaders just when they were most needed!

During this three months' interval of comparative inactivity many things of importance came about. Taylor was promptly brevetted *Major-General.* Then, a little after, Congress, taking the lead, secured for him the full rank. The expedition of General

Digitized by Google

Kearny through New Mexico to end in California, where, in conjunction with Commodore Stockton, of the navy, and Colonel Fremont, the great Path-finder, the Pacific coast was taken, was already on foot. So also had taken place the marvelous march and work of Colonel Doniphan to Chihuahua, ending in a final junction with General Taylor. Again, there was just then a lively correspondence between Washington and General Taylor about different lines of operation; some of this correspondence, unfortunately, fell into the hands of the enemy. A principal question was: Should another co-operating column go toward the City of Mexico? Should it be *via* Tampico, or could we get a lodgment near Vera Cruz, and go that way?

General Scott, who was also a strong Whig, and who quickly resented civilian interference with his plans, was known to be an able military thinker, and he was the senior general; but he was not liked by Mr. Polk or by his secretary, William L. Marcy. He finally was required to submit his views on the route *via* Vera Cruz, and make his estimates of men and means. He did so, yet, had it not been for General Taylor's thorough self-abnegation and remarkable coincidence with Scott as to the route and plan of operations, it is doubtful whether the latter's services there would ever have been put to the test. As it was, General Scott was only given a little more than half his estimates of the required force to carry on an offensive campaign from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico.

All this discussion, planning, and final action were to affect General Taylor's operations. To seize the Rio Grande, to conquer the more northern states of

Digitized by Google

Mexico and to hold them tenaciously, at least as far as the Sierra Madre Mountains, was General Taylor's real work. He did at no time advise his Government to make that crooked and long and easily obstructed line the road to the capture of the Mexican capital. So General Scott's plan from the outset met his sincere and hearty approbation.

The statements of writers that Taylor had during this interval too few troops, is not exact. In fact, he had too many volunteers; not only those provided for by the administration's call, but those also brought into the field through the Department of the Southwest then commanded by General Gaines at New Orleans. There were more than could be immediately utilized. Still, as General Taylor filled up the time of his long enforced delay at Corpus Christi by thoroughness of equipment, organization, discipline, and essential drill, and so prepared his small force to exceed the enemy's in every particular of fitness and preparation, so now the new levies, both regular and volunteer, were remodeled and trained.

Taylor's plan in the first place was to seize Camargo as soon as he could supply a depot there, and, of course, take and hold all intermediate points, and then make that river port the base of his advance into the interior for the capture of Monterey. Camargo was some one hundred and eighty miles above Matamoros. His force was increased, but not his wagons. His requisitions made long before were not yet filled. The best way to supply Camargo was, of course, by water; but the right kind of steamers were not sent. His chief quartermaster had been murdered by the *rancheros;* the younger officer selected and sent to New Orleans in his place was

Digitized by Google

hindered in his work of hiring steamboats by some Washington interference, probably for economy's sake, that all additions that should require money outlay might be done at the one Washington office; so that for more than two months General Taylor did not have the proper river transports, while his army was lying in the lowest Rio Grande Valley exposed to all the dangers of a warm climate at a sickly season. The conclusion is plain enough that the quarter-master-general did not then comprehend the situation, nor make the indispensable preparation, till about two and a half months later, notwithstanding the clearest demand for it. To some extent General Taylor and those around him made noteworthy amends by following the Mexican example—that is, by improvising pack-trains. They soon brought into training whole herds of those docile, hardy little mules which were found in abundance in Texas and Mexico, and so, after procuring or making saddles, managed to move without the additional wagons which yet, as well as the steamboats, unaccountably delayed their coming.

Finally, in August, 1846, the movement to Camargo began. Artillery, cavalry, and one brigade of infantry went by land, using such roads as they could find. To avoid the dangerous heat of the sun, the troops and trains marched by night. Meanwhile the steamers were used for the greater part of the supplies and for the remainder of the command which General Taylor decided to take with him. Even yet the steamers were so few—those that could stem the current of the Rio Grande—that their cargoes had to be repeated. General Taylor went on them back and forth as the necessities for his presence required. An

Digitized by Google

incident of one of these trips to Camargo shows the characteristic method by which he checked the too great self-love of some of his subordinates, and won the confidence and affection of his soldiers. The story, in fact, became public, and was often repeated on the stump in the next presidential campaign. It appears that when he came on board the ascending steamer —then, in addition to other portage, carrying many sick and disabled men—General Taylor found all the berths except his own already occupied by army contractors, sutlers, some officers, and other privileged classes. He immediately sent them instructions to vacate, and filled the rooms and berths they had occupied with the disabled soldiers. Somebody, trying to find him [Taylor] in the morning, went to his state-room, and, lo! his place was filled by a sick man. After search, they at last found the old general wrapped in his blanket on the deck of the vessel, sound asleep. His thoughtful tenderness, of which this is an example, made him very popular among the men, and nerved them also to the easy endurance of the greatest privation and hardship.

It perhaps should be said, in abatement of the stupid inefficiency of the quartermaster's department at this critical time, that Congress itself made some checks and hindrances to the progress of the war. As soon as it became evident to the opposition, then, that there was a clear prospect of acquirement by this struggle of large territories, they put a brake upon the passage of the "three-million-money bill." It was an amendment offered to the bill by the Hon. David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania. It was ever after briefly denominated "The Wilmot Proviso." It read as follows:

Digitized by Google

"*Provided*, That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States by virtue of any treaty that may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor voluntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime whereof the party shall be duly convicted."

Whigs and antislavery men were numerous enough in the House to pass the amended bill, but it failed in the Senate; so that the energetic President lost his three millions, was limited in his resources, and, moreover, was taught by the character of the opposition to go forward in all his operations with caution.

General Worth led the advance from Camargo the last of August, 1846. The road toward Monterey was by no means good; often it was little better than a horse-trail. This difficulty was partially overcome by an excellent body of "sappers and miners," and detailed parties from the troops who freely used the pick and shovel. Want of wagons, as we have seen, was made up by an abundance of pack-trains; and there was, as usual, a great change for the better in the health and spirits of the command as the soldiers advanced, ascending to the higher table-lands, or traversed the pathways and horse-trails leading over the mountains of Mexico. The three columns into which General Taylor divided his army followed substantially the same road, but always with intervals. Colonel Twiggs with his brigade followed General Worth, leaving Camargo September 5th; and General Quitman set out with the rear brigade on Septem-

Digitized by Google

ber 17th. The distance from Camargo to Monterey is one hundred and eighty miles, and that region for the most part is described as rough, dry, desolate, and dreary.

General Taylor brought his divisions together at Ceralvo, a small town at the base of the Sierra Madre, sixty miles from the city of Monterey. Three days' rest were deemed enough; then he pushed on through a mountain defile and encamped in front of Marin; next he moved to within ten miles of Monterey, to a small village named San Francisco. Soon after leaving this town the advance guard encountered a sudden opposition, and received a few shots from the Mexican cannon. General Taylor at this time took for his guard and escort a squadron of the Texas Rangers and pushed ahead to reconnoiter. After he emerged from the mountain road he reached and crossed an extended plain that slopes gently toward the city. Here the fire from the enemy reopened, and a twelve-pounder ball struck the ground a few feet from him. This plain then afforded a lovely region, extending several miles from the city limits, whither the wealthier of the inhabitants in the hot season resorted. General Taylor had Colonel Twiggs put his brigades into camp in a beautiful suburban field, while he with his field-glass, and aided by his active staff, continued to study the splendid little city half encompassed by grand mountains before him, and to observe the foot-hills, crowning redoubts, and separate fortress.

NOTE.—General James Grant Wilson furnishes the following interesting incident, derived from one of his visits to England: The favorite horse of General Taylor, and the one he was riding on his approach to Monterey, and afterward in the battle near

Digitized by Google

Saltillo, was called by the soldiers "Whitey," or, fondly, "Old Whitey."

General Wilson says: "When I first visited the second Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsaye in 1872, I observed hanging on the walls of my sleeping-room, called the 'Coronation Chamber' —from the circumstance of its containing a large picture of the coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey, in which the Iron Duke was a prominent personage—a portrait of General Zachary Taylor, wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat and mounted on 'Old Whitey,' with both legs on one side of the saddle. The picture was sent to the Duke soon after the battle of Buena Vista by an anonymous American friend, and he was so much interested in the quaint representation of old 'Rough and Ready' that it was hung in one of the principal sleeping-apartments of Strathfieldsaye, his country seat, presented to him for a day's work at Waterloo. The second Duke said to me that his father (the Iron Duke) watched the Mexican campaigns with the greatest interest, and entertained a high opinion of the military genius of Generals Taylor and Scott."

To show General Taylor's habit of resting, even in battle, upon his saddle in the position given by the Iron Duke's picture, in one of the early engagements, the story is that he and several members of his staff rode to a prominent knoll to make observations. A Mexican battery commander, seeing the group, poured upon them at once his grape and canister. One of Taylor's staff cried out in trepidation: "We'll all be killed *here!*"

"Upon my word," said Taylor, "I do believe the rascals want to hit me!"

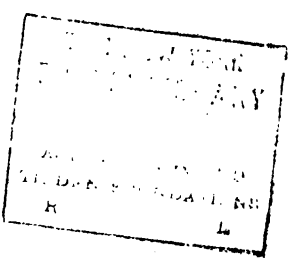
Now an officer, remonstrating, begged him to retire to a safer place.

"Well," said the general, who had been sitting all the time at his ease, with his leg over the saddle, closely scanning the movements going forward, "let us ride up nearer, and then their balls will go over us."

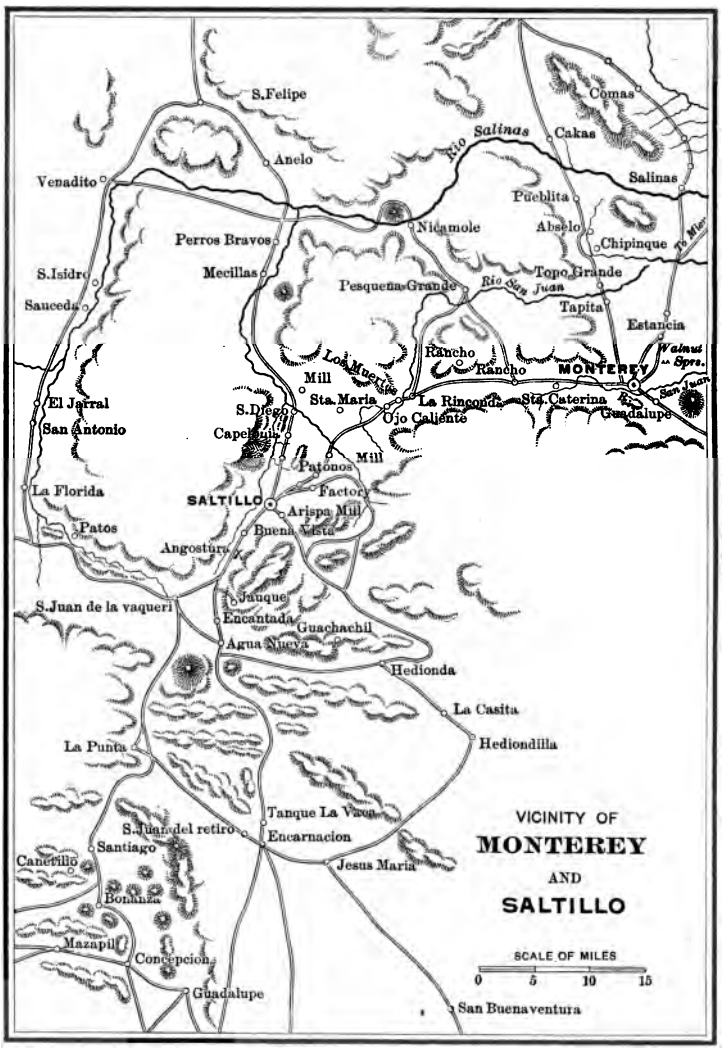
He thereupon rode forward to another hardly less exposed position, where he could keep in view the operating forces.

The color of his favorite horse, "Old Whitey," was indeed a source of special peril, but he never appeared to think of that.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

The storming and capture of Monterey—The city and environments—Arista relieved, Monterey defended by Ampudia—His inspiring address—Taylor's troops—Preparations for battle—Rain and severe cold of the first night—Battle at daybreak—Cheers drew a heavy fire—Quickness of Worth's batteries astonishes the Mexicans—Worth attempts the mountain forts—Federacion captured, its guns turned on Soldado—Mexican panic—Soldado captured—Effort of Mexican commander to charge, driven back—Duncan and Mackall's batteries.

LEAVING General Taylor on the extended plateau with his sturdy face turned southward, looking over the city and the hill-country before him, closely observing several rounded knolls and high points, buildings, and military works, let us go on beyond his actual vision and see if we can not so map out this region as to give the reader an intelligent conception of the environments of Monterey, and of the extraordinary engagements very soon to take place in and near that city.

Monterey is the capital of the State of Nuevo Leon. The population in 1846 was somewhere from ten to twelve thousand. Like most Mexican cities, it had a few rich and many poor inhabitants; yet this was the most thriving town in the State, and more so than any as near to the lower valley of the

Digitized by Google

Rio Grande. It had fair accumulations of property, with thriving suburbs. To General Taylor's front, on the southern side of the city, running just at this place eastward, is the small San Juan River; across this river, making a background for the general's picture, comes a branch of the Sierra Madre Mountains, trending southeast. Just at his feet, near the north side, passes the smaller stream, a branch of the San Juan, which inclines southward and enters the main river at a northern bend east of the city. Off to his right—that is, farther west—there is a long, gourd-shaped hill of considerable height, with very little on it of buildings or trees. On this hill, one may say, on the first terrace, was located the Bishop's Palace. The palace and the protecting works give the name Obispado to that neighborhood. Still farther to the west are the great Sierra Madre Mountains. Without the city limits, and on the near north side, was moderately high ground, which was handsomely crowned with "The Citadel" or "Black Fort." Between General Taylor and the main plaza, to the east of the Citadel, was the stone bridge, a solid structure, guarded by a *tête-de-pont*. Again, to the east of the city, was a grand spur of the Sierra Madre, called, from the shape of its double crest, "Saddle Mountain."

These features, hemming in the pretty valley with hills, mountains, and streams, the general and his staff quickly took in. Now their glasses dwelt on the forts and redoubts. Before him, at the stone bridge entrance to the city, he saw the enveloping intrenchments before mentioned—i. e., the *tête-de-pont*. On the near bank of the small river, farther east, near the confluence of the two rivers, a strong re-

Digitized by Google

doubt named "El Teneria," manned with four heavy guns; above that a second redoubt with three guns, called "Rincon del Diablo"; and above, farther up the valley, another, "Libertad." These, with the Citadel, formed a system of works guarding the northern and eastern approaches. On the west, on the second natural terrace above the Bishop's Palace, the bare, abrupt knoll carried one redoubt upon "Loma del Independencia." The palace and this fort were well constructed, equipped, and manned. South, over the river, high up on the foot-hill of the Sierra spur, were two more redoubts, "Federacion" and "Soldado." These swept the Little San Juan valley up and down with their cannon-fire.

There was something not yet mentioned, of which the general had already had knowledge from the maps that his topographical engineers had carefully prepared and furnished. It was the roads and streets around and within Monterey. Unrolling his maps, he studied and compared. The road on which General Taylor had come, and near which he was standing, entered the city on the north side. It was the main thoroughfare from Camargo *via* Mier, Ceralvo, and Marin; from the east side was the Guadeloupe road; and on the west, coming toward the city down through a gorge and leaving the Obispado height to the left, the Saltillo road made its way along the left bank of the San Juan till it disappeared within the city limits. All the roads that led to the city from the direction of the Rio Grande stopped there at Monterey, and one issue only existed westward, and that was this Saltillo pass or gorge.

The historian Fry, to whom we have before alluded, who has drawn his descriptions either from

Digitized by Google

personal observation or from the narrative of an able observer, gives life to the picture of this beautiful valley in which nestles the handsome, compact city of Monterey. Speaking of the level stretch where General Taylor was observing, he says: "The plain is varied with patches of *chaparral* and fields of corn and sugar-cane, and the light of the sunny undergrowth is relieved by the umbrage of orange, lemon, citron, and olive groves, and other beautiful natives of that genial climate. The mountains which wall up the southern and western horizon rear their rugged and mighty heads far above the clouds of the valley, and a single gorge marks the only continuation to Saltillo of the roads from Rio Grande which coalesce at Monterey. . . ." Speaking of the Citadel, or Black Fort, he says: "Standing on the plain, it covers an area of about three acres, the walls of solid masonry thick and high, with bastions commanding all approach from the northeast, the north, and northwest."

Besides the forts and redoubts which have now been named and located, the Saltillo approach had, according to this writer, another formidable obstruction, viz., "the walls of a cemetery, forming a strong breastwork with embrasures." And finally, in addition to the carefully arranged street barricades: "Monterey presents in its plan and in the form of its buildings extraordinary obstacles to an assault. Regularly laid out, a few pieces of artillery command the whole length of the principal streets. But its chief security is the stone walls of the houses, which, rising above the flat roofs and forming around them and the courts regular parapets, afford thorough protection to their defenders. Each dwell-

Digitized by Google

ing is thus a separate castle, and the whole city one grand fortification, suggested by nature and consummated by art."

The earthworks of the Teneria have long before to-day (in 1892) been absorbed by the surrounding gardens, but the old tannery itself is still standing, and its thick, parapet-like "walls, rising above the flat roofs," are still there hard as granite.

General Arista, after the close of his disastrous Texas, Rio Grande, campaign, had been relieved and ordered to the capital of Mexico, and the defense of Monterey fell to General Pedro de Ampudia. He had, before the engagements, between 7,000 and 8,000, regular Mexican troops, and, according to estimate, probably 3,000 militia. His forces were well armed and well supplied. His artillery numbered forty-two cannon, and was excellently distributed for a stubborn resistance. The hopeful spirit of Ampudia is manifest in his address to his soldiers given on September 24, 1846. An extract reads as follows:

"Soldiers: The enemy, numbering only 2,500 regular troops, the remainder being only a band of adventurers, without valor or discipline, are, according to reliable information, about advancing upon the Ceralvo, to commit the barbarity of attacking this most important place. We count near 3,000 regulars and auxiliary cavalry" (if exact, the reenforcements came later), "and these will defeat them again and again before they can reach this city. Soldiers, we are constructing fortifications, to make our base at a convenient time, and drive back this enemy at the point of the bayonet. . . ." Ampudia closes his address most patriotically:

Digitized by Google

"Soldiers! 'Victory or death' must be our only device!"

General Taylor, as soon as a careful reconnaissance, conducted by that excellent officer, Major Joseph K. F. Mansfield, had been added to his own observation and that of some other officers upon whom he relied, proceeded to form a simple and sensible plan; and it was certainly—like that of Grant at Vicksburg—a bold one. It was, to push a force sufficient for the purpose around to the right, beyond the city, make a lodgment as soon as possible upon the Loma del Independencia (the Obispado), and hasten to secure the enemy's only line of retreat—namely, *the Saltillo gorge and road.* All else was to be subsidiary to this main movement—i. e., first, carefully to cover his supplies; second, to re-enforce as needed; and, third, to demonstrate against the north front so strongly as to hold a large part of Ampudia's men inside their prepared defenses, so that he [Ampudia] could not strengthen or increase his defenders at the point of the principal attack.

The aggregate under General Taylor, to a less bold and sanguine spirit, would have caused at least some trepidation—6,645 officers and men! The artillery was limited to two twenty-four-pounder howitzers, four light batteries of four and six guns, and a ten-inch mortar—surely a meager allowance for assaulting and carrying permanent works or for the siege of a well-fortified place!

General Worth, who had but recently returned to the front, and had not hitherto had part in the operations, being an officer of rank and experience, was chosen by General Taylor and charged with the duty of the turning movement and the main attack.

Digitized by Google

Worth's division, as selected, was not a large one. It consisted of the First Brigade, under Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Staniford, made up as follows: Duncan's battery; Child's battalion of artillery, armed as infantry; and Screven's Eighth Infantry. Second Brigade, under Colonel Persifor F. Smith, to wit: Mackall's battery, Scott's Fifth Infantry, Miles's Seventh Infantry, and Blanchard's Louisiana volunteers. Worth's cavalry, when he set out, was the regiment of Texas mounted riflemen, commanded by Colonel John G. Hays.

General Worth put his division in motion from Walnut Springs about 2 P. M. of the 20th of September. Captain John Sanders, of the engineers, and Lieutenant George G. Meade, of the topographical engineers, then on General Taylor's staff, accompanied this column.

Worth for a while made rather slow progress in his large detour well out and along the western front of the city. The object being first to get upon what was called the Pezqueria-Grande road, it was necessary for some distance to construct a road-bed for the cannon through soft fields of sugar-cane and grain. When darkness came on, the division general had made only six miles, but he had reached the Pezqueria roadway. Here he had come near enough to encounter the fire of the Obispado works. The redoubt "Independencia" was nearest and annoyed him most. Under escort of the Texas riflemen he sought at once to get around behind that fort, to the junction of the Pezqueria with the Saltillo road. Ampudia had quickly understood the intention of his foes, and sent to that important junction considerable cavalry under command of Generals Romero

Digitized by Google

and Torrejon, and had also strengthened the Bishop's Palace and Independencia by an entire regiment of infantry. So General Worth, being too much resisted for his small escort, wisely halted and bivouacked for the night. The rain and the severe cold of that night are mentioned in the reports; but probably these discomforts were about equally trying to both combatants.

The only precautionary moving of other troops than Worth's from their charming camp near "El Bosque," or the Walnut Springs, except a temporary showing about sundown of the divisions of both Twiggs and Butler on that part of the elevated plain visible to the city sentinels, was Taylor's sending forward toward the north front the Fourth Regiment of Infantry to guard the workmen who were planting the ten-inch mortar in a natural trench or ravine which crossed the road leading to the Citadel, and pushing up the artillerymen who were locating the twenty-four-pounder howitzers in the same neighborhood. These efforts were completed after dark, and had the effect on Ampudia's mind of a threatened siege, or perhaps a meditated assault upon the Citadel itself.

Such was the preparation. The morrow promised a great conflict. Neither of the opposing generals could be free from an unusual anxiety. Ampudia had the previously prepared positions, the superior numbers, and a third more cannon than the Americans. Taylor had a well-disciplined, well-organized, and well-commanded little army, full of confidence in itself, and an unswerving trust in the skill of its officers and the ability of its chief. Indeed, these forces, then and there, were by no means very un-

Digitized by Google

equally matched, and no man on either side could with any assurance predict the consequences of the movements already begun.

Before daylight on September 21st General Henderson, who had a detachment consisting of Lieutenant-Colonel May's Second Dragoons and Colonel Wood's Texas mounted volunteers, by General Taylor's orders moved his little column rapidly over the new way that General Worth had opened the preceding afternoon, marching swiftly to strengthen Worth's division. This march of Henderson was interrupted by a countermanding order to return to the north front of the city. Though not that day engaged, this column subserved the purpose of keeping up a clear connection between Worth's division and the remainder of the army at a critical epoch; and May's efficient dragoons continued this most important guarding service to the end of the battle.

The 21st had hardly dawned before the battle was joined. Henderson's cavalry brigade, made up partly from the First Division (General Twiggs) and partlyfrom the Third Division (General Butler), had, as we have seen, set out to re-enforce Worth's division. A regiment of the First Division was already on the front line supporting the batteries which were operating against the Citadel. General Taylor, having his own plan strengthened by a request from Worth to make "a strong diversion," had General Twiggs push off another force to attempt to secure "El Teneria," enter the city at the east side, and, if feasible, turn El Diablo and the Citadel. It was but a diversion to help General Worth, so that whether the works were taken or not was not vital to the success of the day. The chosen brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel

Digitized by Google

Garland's, consisting of the First and Third Infantry, Captain Bragg's battery of artillery, and the Washington and the Baltimore battalion of volunteers, marched off in fine style silently toward the eastern quarter assigned, the cautious Mansfield, accompanied by Captain William G. Williams and Lieut. John Pope, pointing the way. Garland had passed into a cornfield and behind the thick *chaparral* without awakening much opposition from front or flank, when some soldiers of his caught sight across the city of General Worth's troops ascending the heights to the southwest. The cheers for Worth that ensued, which nobody could restrain, are said to have betrayed their location and to have drawn upon themselves an immediate and heavy fire from the forts and works near at hand. Surely no better diversion than this could have occurred, though it cost many lives.

Before giving more in detail an account of the fighting of Twiggs's division and that of its emulating rival, Butler's volunteer division, it is better first to return to General Worth's Second Division and see how he had carried forward the main attack. About 6 A. M. Worth began his march for the Saltillo road. He set out with two columns so stretched out as to form lines right, left, or front at the word; front and flank were covered by his mounted Texans, and his light artillery was near the head of each column. The quickness of those perfectly drilled batteries was most astonishing to the Mexicans. They came into position at a trot, fired without hesitation so rapidly and so accurately, and changed position so soon when they were annoyed by the enemy's guns, that the Mexican troops could not stand long before their surprisingly effective discharges.

Digitized by Google

As General Worth was thus sweeping across the valley, not only did the forts on the Independencia Heights (Obispado) and the two from the foot-hill slope play upon his men, but there issued from behind a hamlet not far from the road-crossing a heavy column of Mexican cavalry under General Romero, the brave Colonel Juan Najera with his Jalisco Lancers in the advance. The Texas riflemen against these were the first in action. The light companies of the regular regiments, in skirmish order, supported the Texans, and, even before the Mexicans could deploy and begin their fire, Duncan had brought his superb battery into action and commenced his swift resistance; Mackall's was not many minutes behind him in artillery practice. The leading brigade (Lieutenant-Colonel Staniford's First) had time to deploy its line and when within close range open a rapid and continuous musketry fire. Before twenty minutes the attacking force of Mexicans was broken and dispersed, leaving upon the field a large number of killed and wounded. Colonel Juan Najera and a hundred Mexicans here lost their lives. The First Brigade, the Second being kept for the time in reserve, let no time go to waste. They, with their mounted comrades, drove on so fast that they caught many prisoners, and, what was of most consequence, secured the Saltillo road and gorge, and so cut off the enemy's only line of retreat or supply.

Now, General Worth from the gorge naturally turned his face straight toward the city and made his way slowly, skirmishing and observing as he went. His engineer officers assured him that it would be foolhardy to undertake the city itself till

Digitized by Google

the protecting redoubts—two, Federacion and Soldado on the mountain foot-hill spur to his right, and the Independencia redoubt and the Bishop's Palace and Chapel, converted into a strong work, on the Obispado knoll to his left—were captured. And, furthermore, the straight road was shut up by lower batteries at or near the cemetery, and by musketry everywhere behind safe barricades along the city front. He instantly ordered his officers to get ready and attempt the mountain forts first.

Captain Charles F. Smith, who at the beginning of our late civil war ranked among the best of our leaders, was put in charge of a special assaulting column. This force was made up of two companies (as infantry) of the Fourth and one company each of the Second and Third Artillery; also Major Chevalie, acting in support with six companies of the Texas riflemen. There were a little more than three hundred men. Federacion was to give the first trial of arms. Methinks I see this little band as they deploy at the base of the mountain spur. There is no straggling; there is no delay. As one man they commence the toilsome ascent. Fry says of them: "Upward they went, breasting sometimes the plunging discharges of the enemy's batteries high above them, and sometimes screened for a moment by a protecting rock or a cluster of underwood. Occasionally they paused to return the fire, and in a moment were again climbing the rugged and perilous steep, from whose crowning crest balls of iron and copper rained upon them."

The Mexicans did their best. Their men of the light troops, seeking cover outside the works, picked off not a few; but doubtless here, as elsewhere, high

Digitized by Google

and steep hills were not the most favorable for the defense. Neither cannon nor small arms were sufficiently depressed for the best execution. General Worth, perceiving the difficulties to be met when Captain Smith with his handful of heroes had fairly reached the crest, with such numbers swarming against him, promptly sent forward the Seventh Infantry. This regiment had not gone far up the ascent before the anxious general, calling to him Colonel Persifor F. Smith, directed him to take the Fifth Infantry and the Louisiana regiment, hasten on, and make assurance doubly sure. Colonel Smith, in no way reluctant, made all speed. With such a support, and full of emulation, the advance did nowhere delay long. They ran straight upon the outside Mexican supports, they mingled with them, and charged with them at once over the parapets, which, fortunately, were not high and steep enough to prevent. A panic now seized their enemies, and they ran in utter disorder down the opposite slope of the foot-hill spur. Cheer followed cheer as the flag of Mexico came down and the Stars and Stripes went up to the top of the flag-staff.

Seeing the likelihood of the three hundred getting the first prize, Colonel Persifor F. Smith turned part of his force with orders to pass into the separating ravine and make for Soldado. Here, now, Colonel Smith and his men were on the lead, but the gallant Captain Smith quickly lent them aid. He turned the cannon of Federacion upon Soldado, and sent over a support that might be needed.

The story of the next capture is about the same as the last. The soldiers toiled up the steeps, getting all the cover they could and firing up against a

Digitized by Google

ceaseless discharge of heavy guns and musketry, till they came to within fifty or sixty yards of the crest; then accumulating their strength, with a shout and an old-fashioned charge they cleared all obstacles and took the fort, turning some of the cannon left loaded against their fleeing foes. Soon these pieces were reloaded and opened upon the Bishop's Palace and Independencia redoubt, from which they received an instant and hostile reply. The reserves of regulars and volunteers, including the artillery of Duncan and Mackall, under the keen eye of General Worth, had watched and guarded the rear of the attacking troops. They had all the afternoon repulsed or checked every effort of Torrejon to interpose a Mexican force of cavalry between the gorge and the the forts upon the mountain spur that we have seen so successfully assailed.

All day without food; in the cold rain with little or no cover the night of the 20th; fighting and toiling up the steeps for hours, with the dead and dying marking their progressive steps all the 21st; and now, as the sun went down, exposed to a violent storm, the gallant soldiers of Worth had, it would seem, no common hardships to bear; but the joy of a great victory was so great that it made the hardships seem a pleasure; and even the wild storm did not abate the expressions of their triumph.

The aiding forces of Twiggs and Butler, in the immediate presence of General Taylor on the northeast portion of the city, have had even harder tasks, though such was not originally contemplated in General Taylor's simple plan of attack. But no human will, however strong, can control all the details of a battle. A plan may be wise, and every effort be

Digitized by Google

made to carry it into effective execution, yet some slight misunderstanding or sudden dash of the enemy may disconcert the whole preliminary arrangement. That the plan for taking Monterey could have been so thoroughly adhered to throughout is a marvel.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

The storming and capture of Monterey (continued)—Story of the north front—Baltimore and Washington volunteers break—Regulars worked forward under great resistance into Monterey—Brilliant work of Captain Backus—Lieutenant-Colonel Garland withdraws his men—Terrible encounter of the Fourth Infantry—General Quitman surprises his foes, who abandon their wounded and flee—General Butler and Colonel Mitchell wounded—Lieutenant-Colonel Garland again—The strong diversion accomplished—The night rest at El Bosque—Prolonged through the 22d of September—Lieutenant-Colonel Child's night march and morning assault—The redoubt upon Loma de Independencia captured at dawn—Bishop's Palace taken—A combined Mexican effort—How met by General Worth and defeated—General Morales's proposal miscarried—General Taylor and Jefferson Davis—Ampudia's letter—Taylor's reply—Preliminaries to the armistice and capitulation—The terms agreed upon.

Now let us go back to Garland. After the cheering of his men as they caught the first glimpse of their companions on the high ground beyond the city, he made an immediate deployment fronting El Teneria, Major William W. Lear's Third Infantry occupying the right, Major John J. Abercrombie's First Infantry the center, and Lieutenant-Colonel Watson's Baltimore and Washington volunteers the left. This line, with its advanced guard well ahead, and Bragg's battery near the right, moved toward the

Digitized by Google

fort at a quick step. The fire from El Teneria was kept up against their front, and their right flank was especially exposed to the cannonade from the Citadel. This increasing danger was aggravated by an order for the whole detachment to change direction more to their right. In Lieutenant-Colonel Watson's effort to manœuvre the volunteers they broke up and the majority ran to the rear, some seeking the first substantial cover at hand, while others continued their retreat to the camp at El Bosque. Deserted by the Washington and Baltimore volunteers, except by its gallant commander and some seventy brave men, the remainder, the regulars, worked their way forward into the suburbs under fearful resistance, over light intrenchments, then across to a ditch and into the edge of the city.

Captain Electus Backus, of the First Infantry, with Mansfield, became the brilliant point in these operations. He gained the roof of the tannery proper, a sort of sentinel post in rear of the Teneria redoubt, by a quick movement, capturing a number of prisoners; and he, having less than one hundred men, with another captain, J. M. Scott, remained in that singular corner exposed to the fire of this Teneria redoubt and Diablo for some time. Here discovering that a suburban distillery was another sentinel post behind the Teneria redoubt, he had his men concentrate their fire on that.

Captain Joseph H. La Motte's company of the same regiment appears here to have been incorporated with these two, after great losses, including that of La Motte, wounded twice in this vicinity. By ten o'clock the distillery, that had been filled with Mexican soldiers and many women and children, was

Digitized by Google

entirely evacuated. The party had run in terror and confusion to the shelter of Rincon del Diablo. Thus Captain Backus secured the entering wedge for his general to the main work, El Teneria.

Now, a little after ten, came a backset. Major Mansfield made up his mind that the forts on the north front could not be carried, and that it was a waste of life to stay there in the city; so Garland, under Mansfield's advice, began to withdraw his detachment very steadily. But our gallant Captain Backus, who once or twice debouched to harass his foe, fortunately did not receive any orders to retire. He greatly strengthened his defense in the tannery and the distillery, and stood fast.

General Taylor, seeing how hard pressed Garland was, who had pushed so well into the city, had ordered up the Fourth Infantry, also Colonel Mitchell's Ohio regiment, Colonel Campbell's Tennessee regiment, and Colonel Davis's Mississippi rifles in support, the Ohioans to aid Bragg's battery, and the other (Quitman's brigade) to follow the Fourth Infantry toward the left. General Butler, the division commander, accompanied the Ohio troops. They came a little too late to save the front positions that Garland had reached. The three companies of the Fourth Infantry in the advance encountered in front of the terrible El Teneria a most murderous discharge of guns from the now re-enforced and confident enemy. Nearly a third of the officers and men were killed and wounded.

Naturally enough, El Teneria opened her gateway, pushed out a part of the artillery, and began to play upon Captain Backus's companies at the distillery. Backus's men made return. The battery lost heavily,

Digitized by Google

and the Teneria garrison began to lose many of its defenders, when, to the joy of Backus's devoted band, they saw General Quitman moving his brigade straight upon El Teneria. Being partially occupied with Backus, the Mexican garrison was quickly defeated. The Mexicans fled, even abandoning their wounded comrades, fleeing as rapidly as they could to El Diablo. Captain Backus pressed the fugitives hard as they crossed the creek, and captured some twenty soldiers from the mass.

Meanwhile General Butler, Quitman's division commander, moved against the city more directly with his Ohio troops of Hamer's brigade; but the engineer officer thinking there would be too great loss there against the heavily manned defenses, General Taylor ordered the withdrawal of the troops. The withdrawal was commenced, but, immediately the order for it was countermanded, Quitman's capture of the Teneria redoubt having been at that moment reported to General Taylor.

Butler made another effort, pushing into a position intermediary between the bridge-head and Rincon del Diablo. From the bridge-head the cross-fire was too hot to be endured. Among others who fell here, General Butler himself, the colonel (Mitchell) of the Ohio regiment, and his adjutant, were seriously wounded; and in consequence of these losses, and with no gain apparent to them, the devoted men were drawn back to the plain. A writer says this move was made "amidst the *vivas* of the enemy; and the bells of the cathedral rang a merry peal in evidence of the general joy." A cavalry charge of two regiments of Mexican lancers, under General Conde, followed up this repulse and retreat. The

Digitized by Google

Ohioans, aided by our batteries, ran to a neighboring hedge, faced about, and fired rapidly till they had driven Conde's cavalry back and out of sight. After the withdrawal of the Ohio regiment by General Hamer, to whom General Butler when wounded had turned over the command, the situation was as follows: Quitman's brigade of volunteers and companies of the three regular regiments had taken cover in the Teneria redoubt and buildings near it. They were receiving a heavy fire from the Rincon del Diablo and the occupied houses toward the Purisima bridge. General Twiggs, although quite ill, arrived at this time and caused the captured artillery—served by Randolph Ridgely, who had been since Palo Alto promoted a brevet captain and assistant adjutant-general, but readily went back to artillery work—to fire upon the next redoubt until the arrival of Captain Webster with the twenty-four-pounder howitzer. Bragg's battery during the same period was firing into the city from near the same point. A salient of the defenses of Monterey, with the Teneria redoubt as its apex, had been captured and was firmly held. At last, between one and two o'clock, Lieutenant-Colonel Garland, with praiseworthy perseverance, gathered the scattered portions of his command of the morning and made another effort. Under instructions from General Taylor, he was to enter the city and attempt Fort Rincon del Diablo. Garland, speaking of the two parts of his detachment in his report, says: "These two commands, although few in number, sustained themselves in the most admirable manner under the heaviest fire of the day," for the fort (Diablo), the bridge-head, and a fresh battery, but one hundred

Digitized by Google

yards away, all concentrated upon them a continuous and destructive fire.

After very heavy losses in officers and men and the expenditure of his ammunition, he writes: "I reluctantly ordered the Spartan band to retire, and I am truly proud to say, under all their afflictions, it was accomplished in good order." General Taylor, doubtless seeing that Garland was greatly disappointed that he had been twice repulsed and forced to retire before the Mexicans, showed his confidence in him by giving him the command for the night of a front line composed of the First Kentucky, the regular infantry of Twiggs's division, and Randolph Ridgely's improvised battery.

Just at dark, as a heavy storm of rain, the ordinary sequence of continued cannonading, set in, Ampudia made one more attempt to regain some of his lost ground. From the southeast corner of the city, crossing the San Juan, the Mexicans made a sudden display of cavalry; but the well-served battery of Ridgely, quickly leaving El Teneria, chose a favorable position and opened its guns upon the swift-comers. The rapid fire soon checked their advance and drove them from the field.

Thus during this memorable day had General Taylor fully complied with his promise to make a strong diversion on the northern and eastern fronts of the city, in order to keep the enemy engaged there, while the faithful Worth and his brave men were executing their—the most important—part of the plan. Butler and Twiggs had, under his eye, charged the most formidable works, had got possession of the tannery, the distillery, and the Teneria redoubt, and so had made a strong lodgment in the city itself.

Digitized by Google

While Worth's tired but victorious soldiers were sleeping in the rain where they fought, their comrades, except Garland's front line, went back to get rest and refreshment at El Bosque or Walnut Springs. The night that followed was a hard one for the wounded. These pallid sufferers always plead against the arbitrament of war—and certainly the field of Monterey that night of September 21, 1846, furnished most touching arguments for peace and good-will among men. The previous hard fighting, the extraordinary excitement under alternate success and repulse, the long distance to the camp at El Bosque, occasioning morning and evening lengthy marches, had so much weakened the men—that is, those left after the dreadful loss of life—that General Taylor concluded, cost what it might, to let Butler's and Twiggs's divisions have a rest during the whole of the 22d. The light batteries of Bragg and Ridgely, the heavy guns in the ravine which fronts the Citadel, and the mortar battery, all of which had been here and there in constant requisition and use from the beginning, were, of course, in their places on the front lines and always well supported by regular troops, so that no ground already held would be lost; and the enemy would not dare diminish any in proximity, for Taylor's active and watchful front-line men would quickly see and take advantage of such withdrawals. So that, as we have said, further demonstrations and diversions were wisely postponed till General Worth could complete his great work undertaken outside of Monterey.

General Worth selected Lieutenant-Colonel Childs to command an expedition that required all

Digitized by Google

the resources of an able and experienced soldier. He put under him one company of the artillery, two companies of the Fourth and three of the Eighth Infantry, the six together to be led by Captain Screven. In addition were two hundred Texas riflemen under Colonel Hays. The first order to Childs was to take the Independencia redoubt. The expedition began the ascent of the hill toward the fort before the dawn. After the heavy rain the air was misty, and at the crest very dark with clouds. Steadily and silently the men made their way up the rough ascent till within perhaps a hundred yards of the outworks of the fort, when they received from a watching force of Mexicans a fire in their faces; but this did not stagger any except the few who were hit. Quick as thought, after a return volley, Childs's order to charge was repeated by the almost breathless officers, when all sprang forward as one man, mingled with the retreating foe, and rushed into the fort. The Mexican garrison lost no time in running pell-mell down the opposite side of the slopes, making all haste for the Bishop's Palace.

As the sun rose above the horizon that morning and cleared away the clouds and mists from Obispado, the Stars and Stripes were seen waving from the flag-staff of Independencia. General Worth was not a little disappointed to find that the Mexicans had during the night removed all the artillery from the fort to the Palace. The Bishop's Palace, though neither a fort nor a redoubt, was a very strong barricaded place. It had thick defensive walls of masonry, and they were now defended by at least three cannon and plenty of musketry.

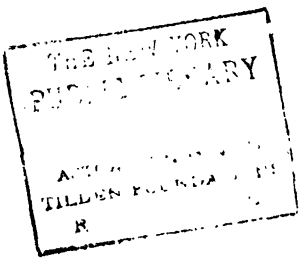
The Independencia redoubt dominated the posi-

Digitized by Google

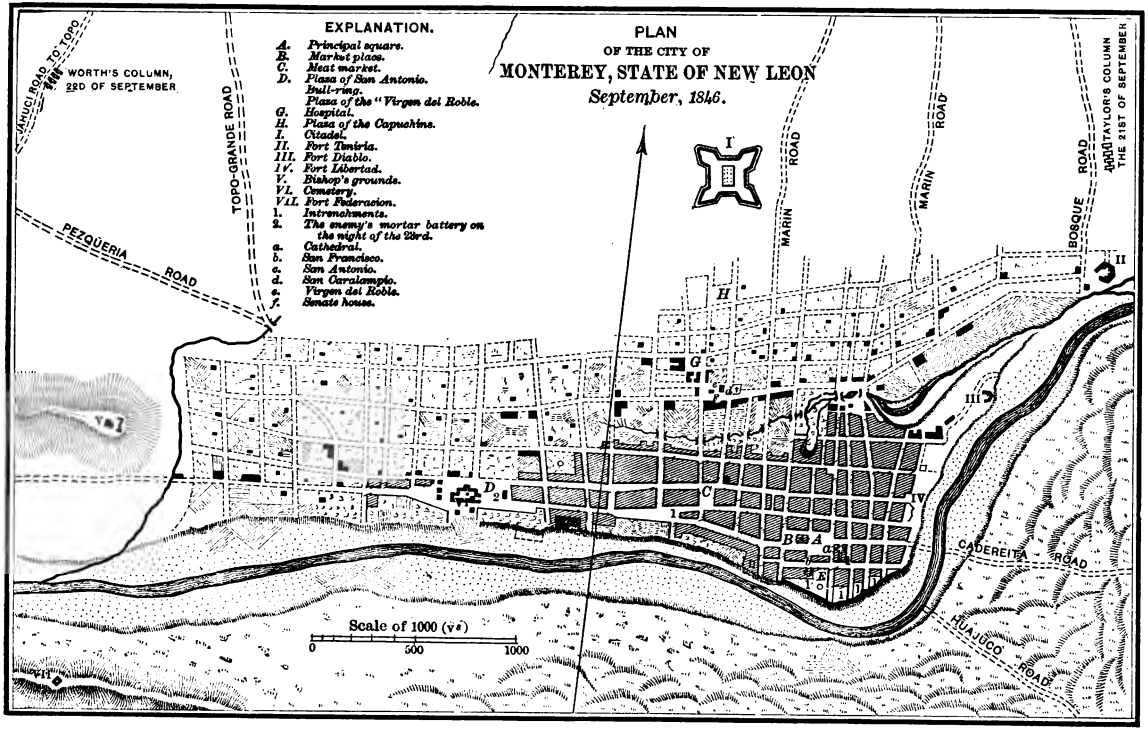
tion. Lieutenant John F. Roland, of Duncan's battery, guided by Captain Sanders, of the Engineer Corps, who had found a practicable path to climb, soon succeeded in lifting and dragging a twelve-pounder howitzer to the fort, and then so placed it under good cover as to fire shells into the inner circles of the Bishop's Palace — the distance was perhaps four hundred and twenty yards—with a plunging fire. The ordnance at the Palace could make no effective return, so that the officer in command at once saw the absolute necessity of retaking Independencia redoubt. General Worth, seeing several attempts undertaken by the Mexicans which Colonel Childs's men had thus far repelled, and noticing a further more concerted preparation to gain the lost fort, ordered over from the opposite ridge the Louisiana volunteers and the Fifth Regulars. Fortunately, everything on the Obispado side was ready, when a large body of Mexican cavalry began boldly to ascend the Obispado hill, evidently making for the fort. At the same time a considerable force of infantry issued from the Palace and formed in support. It was to be a supreme effort to regain a lost field.

Behold Worth's preparations! His little army, all that was on that side of the valley, was deployed near the crest of the hill. Colonel Hays, with part of the mounted riflemen, was on one flank, and Lieutenant-Colonel Walker, with the remainder, on the other. The whole front was covered by skirmishers under Captain John R. Vinton. As the Mexicans came on, Vinton skirmished as if on parade, retiring little by little, till the enemy came within effective range of Worth's strong line. Then

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google


EXPLANATION.
A. Principal square.
B. Market place.
C. Meat market.
D. Plaza of San Antonio.
Bull-ring.
Plaza of the "Virgen del Roble.
G. Hospital.
H. Plaza of the Capuchins.
I. Citadel.
II. Fort Teniria.
III. Fort Diablo.
IV. Fort Libertad.
V. Bishop's grounds.
VI. Cemetery.
VII. Fort Federacion.
1. Intrenchments.
2. The enemy's mortar battery on the night of the 23rd.
a. Cathedral.
b. San Francisco.
c. San Antonio.
d. San Caralampio.
e. Virgen del Roble.
f. Senate house.
PLAN
OF THE CITY OF
MONTEREY, STATE OF NEW LEON
September, 1846.
ROAD TO TOPO
WORTH'S COLUMN, 22D OF SEPTEMBER
TOPO-GRANDE ROAD
PEZQUERIA ROAD
MARIN ROAD
MARIN ROAD
BOSQUE ROAD
TAYLOR'S COLUMN THE 21ST OF SEPTEMBER
CADEREITA ROAD
HUAJUCO ROAD
Scale of 1000 (vs)
0
500
1000

began one of those destructive and continuous discharges which, even before the day of breech-loading guns, mowed down the opposing ranks like ripened grain before the scythe. The Mexicans were stopped. They wavered a moment as comrades and horses fell to the ground, and then they broke into fragments and fled down the steeps toward the Palace and toward the city. Worth's line, commanded by Childs, sprang up and followed. With those who ran through the gates of the Palace, Childs's men entered, took prisoners, tore down the Mexican flag, hoisted their own, and at once turned the guns, which had been loaded to destroy them, against the Mexican masses that were hurrying down the road and paths to get beyond the city barricades to safety.

This ended the first stage of the main attack. General Taylor had done two good things in this affair: first, he had with great good judgment made the plan, and, second, he had committed the execution to General Worth. He later had exceeded the personal efforts of his chief in one respect. He had thus far so arranged the order and manner of his assaults as to give abundant results with but comparatively small loss of life.

There is little more for this day, the 22d. The heavy guns that were taken were put in position for the bombardment of the city itself, and Worth's division was brought together at the Bishop's Palace preparatory, at the word, to push into the streets of Monterey and struggle for its capture.

General Taylor had, about mid-day, sent Quitman's brigade of Butler's division to relieve the north front lines and give the watchers there the needed refreshment and rest. The batteries were so

Digitized by Google

placed and covered by epaulements that they could resist any kind of sortie from the Citadel or from the streets on that side.

General Ampudia had very naturally become alarmed at the turn things were taking. He had evidently supposed that General Taylor, with his two divisions, was making the main effort against him from the north side of the city. His soldiers had there made a most persistent and gallant defense, and they had by no means lost hope of holding out. But General Worth's progress was deliberate, guarded, and sure. The gorge and Ampudia's line of supply and retreat had been taken, and now the four strong places on the southwest had fallen and their armament was turned against the city itself. The morrow would see this [Worth's] triumphant division swarming into the city. There was one hope for the Mexican general—namely, to concentrate all his force within narrower limits, such as could be held with few men, and so leave him a strong movable force with which to attack General Worth, drive him back, defeat him utterly, and recover his lost line of supply. In keeping with this—a desperate resolve—General Ampudia withdrew, during the night of the 22d, the garrison from Rincon del Diablo, El Libertad, and from the northern and eastern fronts, except from the Citadel itself. The inner lines, including all street barricades, were diligently strengthened. One hopeful measure, however, proposed early in the morning of the 23d, miscarried; it was General Morales's application to General Taylor for permission to remove from the city all the non-combatants. It was refused.

At daylight of this eventful day (September 23d)

Digitized by Google

General Taylor joined General Quitman, now the division commander, and saw him move forward his columns into the city—first, to occupy the evacuated works, and, second, to reconnoiter as far ahead as practicable. Here General Taylor's enterprising son-in-law, Colonel Jefferson Davis, came into prominence. Quitman had sent him with four or five companies of Mississippi and Tennessee volunteers to work his way as far as he could. He did so; but soon the opposition from barricades and housetops became so terrific that his detachment was re-enforced. General Taylor sent him Bragg's battery and other supports, including the Third Regular Infantry. The troops slowly made their way, now by breaking through the yard house-walls, now by clearing the flat roofs and using them like forts. The resistance was strong and dogged, and only yielded to superior numbers or to superior skill. At last Colonel Davis had led his men from house to house, from court to court, till they were within one block of the main plaza.

Meanwhile Worth on his side, after a few hours' delay for orders, had not been idle. He took a good place of observation, sending forward two co-operating columns of attack. They were to push along the available streets as far as they could without fatal exposure. Parties were armed with iron bars, sledge-hammers, and picks, and directed to do as we have seen Quitman's men doing—that is, take a house, break through its walls and through the court-walls, and so pass from house to house in engineering style. The workmen, probably the sappers and miners, were followed by good marksmen who kept their foes too busy to hinder the work;

Digitized by Google

and the marksmen were followed by cannon which were distributed among the officers—Duncan, Roland, Mackall, Martin, and others—so that each might have only the care of a single piece. These troops, before night of the 23d, had, like so many moles, tunneled their way along till they had come to a street but one remove from the great plaza.

In all probability, General Taylor—at night not hearing from Worth, and not even knowing that his last instructions, which required concert of action and co-operation, had reached him—had concluded that it would be too hazardous to stay where Colonel Davis had penetrated, so that he withdrew all Quitman's and Twiggs's men to the captured forts and corresponding barricades. But Worth kept open his tunnels and remained in place all night. His men wanted the great honor of seizing that principal plaza. That dreadful ten-inch mortar, cared for and controlled by Major Monroe, had found its way around the suburbs and was sending shells from its square (San Antonio) into the heart of the city. From one of those flat roofs near by two howitzers and another field-piece were noisily throwing projectiles in different directions, for they were said to dominate everything except, perhaps, the Citadel itself.

Not long after this artillery began to send forth its missiles of destruction, General Ampudia, seeing the hopelessness of further resistance, on September 23, 1846, at nine o'clock at night, penned the following good letter:

"GENERAL: As I have made all the defense of which I believe this city capable, I have fulfilled my

Digitized by Google

obligation, and done all required by that military honor which, to a certain degree, is common to all the armies of the civilized world; and as a continuation of the defense would only bring upon the population distress, to which they have already been sufficiently subjected by the evils consequent upon war, and believing that the American Government will appreciate these sentiments, I propose to your Excellency to evacuate the city and Citadel, taking with me the *personnel* and *materiel* of war which is left, and under the assurance that no prosecution shall be undertaken against the citizens who have taken part in the defense.

"Be pleased to accept the assurance of my most distinguished consideration.

"PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

"*Señor Don* Z. TAYLOR, *General-in-Chief of the American Army.*"

This letter did not go through the lines till daylight. At 7 A.M. of September 24th General Taylor wrote his answer:

"In answer to your proposition to evacute the city and fort, with all the *personnel* and *materiel* of war, I have to state that my duty compels me to decline acceding to it. A complete surrender of the town and garrison, the latter as prisoners of war, is now demanded. But such surrender will be upon terms; and the gallant defense of the place, creditable alike to the Mexican troops and nation, will prompt me to make those terms as liberal as possible. The garrison will be allowed, at your option, after laying down its arms, to retire to the interior, on condition of not serving again during the war or

Digitized by Google

until regularly exchanged. I need hardly say that the rights of non-combatants will be respected.

"An answer to this communication is required by twelve o'clock. If you assent to an accommodation, an officer will be dispatched at once, under instructions to arrange the conditions.

"I am, sir, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR,

"*Major-General, U. S. Army, Commanding.*

"*Señor Don* PEDRO AMPUDIA, *General-in-Chief, Monterey.*"

Of course this gentle non-concurrence of General Taylor with the conditions of the evacuation only delayed the final consummation. Hostilities were to cease till noon of the 24th. So General Ampudia hastened to reply, and asked, through General Worth, for a personal interview with the commander-in-Chief of the attacking army. In compliance, General Taylor immediately rode over to the headquarters of his division general, and the two commanders, at 11 A. M., met and consulted. The Mexican general was no longer as straightforward as one from his letters would have judged him to be. It was now news from Mexico which caused delay; there was there, so he claimed, a change in the administration. The original orders from his capital were no longer of such mandatory effect. He was, nevertheless, disposed to make terms. But after a few minutes' conversation it was evident to General Taylor that Ampudia intended to avoid a veritable surrender, so that the former at once declared for a continuance of the battle. But before the generals had separated several Mexican officers interceded, and effected a

Digitized by Google

compromise in the establishment of a joint commission, instructed to consider and agree, if possible, upon terms of capitulation.

Generals Worth and Henderson and Colonel Jefferson Davis represented General Taylor, while Generals Ortega and Raquena and the Governor of Nueva Leon, Señor Llano, represented the Mexican commander.

Taylor's demands were set forth, simply and briefly, in six propositions, viz.:

"I. As the legitimate result of the operations before this place, and the present position of the contending armies, we demand the surrender of the town, the arms and munitions of war, and all other public property within the place.

"II. That the Mexican armed force retire beyond the Rinconada, Linares, and San Fernando, on the coast.

"III. The commanding general of the army of the United States agrees that the Mexican officers reserve their side-arms and private baggage, and the troops be allowed to retire under their officers without parole, a reasonable time being allowed to withdraw the forces.

"IV. The immediate delivery of the main work, now occupied, to the army of the United States.

"V. To avoid collisions, and for mutual convenience, that the troops of the United States shall not occupy the town until the Mexican forces have been withdrawn, except for hospital purposes, storehouses, etc.

"VI. The commanding general of the United States agrees not to advance beyond the line specified in the second section before the expiration of

Digitized by Google

eight weeks, or until the respective governments can be heard from."

Ampudia's commissioners would not at first fully agree to these terms. Jefferson Davis's subsequent celebrity renders his minutes upon the work of this joint commission of perhaps an increased interest. His notes are as follows:

"Upon returning to the reception-room, after the fact had been announced that the commissioners could not agree upon terms, General Ampudia entered at length upon the question, treating the point of disagreement as one which involved the honor of his country, spoke of his desire for a settlement without further bloodshed, and said he did not care about the pieces of artillery which he had at the place. General Taylor responded to the wish to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. It was agreed that the commission should reassemble, and we were instructed to concede the small arms; and I supposed there would be no question about the artillery. The Mexican commissioners now urged that, as all other arms had been recognized, it would be discreditable to the artillery if required to march out without anything to represent their arm, and stated, in answer to an inquiry, that they had a battery of light artillery, manœuvred and equipped as such. The commission again arose, and reported the disagreement on the point of artillery.

"General Taylor hearing that no more was demanded than the middle ground, upon which, in a spirit of generosity, he had agreed to place the capitulation, announced the conference at an end, and rose in a manner which showed his determination to talk no more. As he crossed the room to leave it,

Digitized by Google

one of the Mexican commissioners addressed him, and some conversation which I did not hear ensued. General Worth asked permission of General Taylor, and addressed some remarks to General Ampudia, the spirit of which was that he had manifested throughout the negotiation—viz., generosity and leniency, and a desire to spare the further effusion of blood. The commission reassembled, and the points of capitulation were agreed upon. After a short recess we again repaired to the room in which we had parted from the Mexican commissioners; they were tardy in joining us, and slow in executing the instrument of capitulation. The seventh, eighth, and ninth articles were added during this session. At a late hour the English original was handed to General Taylor for his examination, the Spanish original having been sent to General Ampudia. General Taylor signed and delivered to me the instrument as it was submitted to him, and I returned to receive the Spanish copy with the signature of General Ampudia, and send that having General Taylor's signature, that each general might countersign the original to be retained by the other. General Ampudia did not sign the instrument, as was expected, but came himself to meet the commissioners. He raised many points which had been settled, and evinced a disposition to make the Spanish differ in essential points from the English instrument. General Worth was absent. Finally he was required to sign the instrument prepared for his own commissioners, and the English original was left with him, that he might have it translated (which he promised to do that night) and be ready the next morning, with a Spanish duplicate of the English instrument left with him.

Digitized by Google

By this means the two instruments would be made to correspond, and he be compelled to admit his knowledge of the contents of the English original before he signed it.

"The next morning the commissioners again met; again the attempt was made, as had been often done before by solicitation, to gain some grant in addition to the compact. Thus we had, at their request, adopted the word capitulation in lieu of surrender; they now wished to submit stipulation for capitulation. It finally became necessary to make a peremptory demand for the immediate signing of the English instrument by General Ampudia, and the literal translation (now perfected) by the commissioners and their general. The Spanish instrument first signed by General Ampudia was destroyed in presence of his commissioners; the translation of our own instrument was countersigned by General Taylor, and delivered. The agreement was complete, and it only remained to execute the terms."

The instrument itself is:

"Terms of capitulation of the city of Monterey, the capital of Nueva Leon, agreed upon by the undersigned commissioners, to wit: General Worth, of the United States Army, General Henderson, of the Texas Volunteers, and Colonel Davis, of the Mississippi Riflemen, on the part of Major-General Taylor, commanding the United States forces; and General Raquena and General Ortega, of the Army of Mexico, and Señor Manuel M. Llano, Governor of Nueva Leon, on the part of Señor Don Pedro Ampudia, general-in-chief of the army of the north of Mexico.

"Art. 1. As the legitimate result of the opera-

Digitized by Google

tions before this place, and the present condition of the contending armies, it is agreed that the city, the fortifications, cannon, the munitions of war, and all other public property, with the undermentioned exceptions, be surrendered to the commanding-general of the United States forces now at Monterey.

"Art. 2. That the Mexican forces be allowed to retain the following arms, to wit: the commissioned officers their side-arms, the infantry their arms and accoutrements, the cavalry their arms and accoutrements, the artillery one field battery, not to exceed six pieces, with twenty-one rounds of ammunition.

"Art. 3. That the Mexican armed forces retire, within seven days from this date, beyond the line formed by the pass of the Rinconada, the city of Linares, and San Fernando de Pusas.

"Art. 4. That the Citadel at Monterey be evacuated by the Mexican and occupied by the American forces to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

"Art. 5. To avoid collisions and for mutual convenience, that the troops of the United States will not occupy the city until the Mexican forces have withdrawn, except for hospital and storage purposes.

"Art. 6. That the forces of the United States will not advance beyond the line specified in the second (third) article before the expiration of eight weeks, or until the orders or instructions of the respective governments can be received.

"Art. 7. That the public property to be delivered shall be turned over and received by officers appointed by the commanding generals of both armies.

"Art. 8. That all doubts as to the meaning of

Digitized by Google

any of the preceding articles shall be solved by an equitable construction, and on principles of liberality to the retiring army.

"Art. 9. That the Mexican flag, when struck at the Citadel, may be saluted by its own battery.

"Done at Monterey, September 24, 1846."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

Terms of the capitulation objected to—Causes of Taylor's leniency —Comments of American members of the Joint Commission —Bravery of both sides—Taylor's force too small for complete investment—Too small for effective pursuit—Ammunition and supplies gained, etc.—Taylor's own defense—Letters to the Secretary of War—Sure escape of the bulk of Ampudia's force except for the capitulation—Loss of life—Explosions of magazines—Damage to the city.—The capitulation paralyzed the enemy for a period when he could not have moved for want of wagons—Troops taken from Taylor without consultation — Results of liberal treatment — Private letter of Taylor's which explains the situation and the necessity of the capitulation—His good heart—General Taylor's graceful commendation of his officers and men.

THE terms of agreement, as signed by the Joint Commission and approved by Generals Ampudia and Taylor, were substantially carried into execution. General Taylor, who was never a politician or partisan, was nevertheless known to belong to the Whig party, which was not at this time in power. His phenomenal success had already brought him into the focus of public observation, and caused the Whigs to talk of him as their representative leader—that is to say, as their probable candidate for the presidency for the ensuing political campaign. This attitude, for which Taylor was in no other way responsible except, perhaps, by his public deeds and noble character, necessarily brought to bear upon

Digitized by Google

him more or less the jealousy and criticism of the party in power; so that it is not at all wonderful that from time to time members of that party were looking for grounds of reproach.

When his terms, like those of Sherman with Johnston during our late war, first reached Washington, they gave apparent disappointment and caused much fault-finding—not only in the administrative departments, but soon in public speeches on the floors of Congress, and from political platforms in different parts of the country. The Mexican general [Ampudia] promoted this spirit of fault-finding by his proclamation announcing to his army that there had been, previous to the surrender, "a great scarcity of ammunition and provisions." This statement was a falsehood, but it justified those hostile to Taylor in stating "that if he [Taylor] had pressed the Mexicans a little longer he might have taken their whole army prisoners of war."

The opposition to General Taylor was at its height when a member of Congress presented a "resolution of thanks to General Taylor and the army under his command for their gallantry in the capture of Monterey." A significant amendment was made to the resolution—viz., "that nothing herein contained shall be construed into an approbation of the terms of capitulation at Monterey."

It was exceedingly mortifying to General Taylor and his friends that the resolutions took this shape, so that for some time efforts were made by him and other distinguished officers to spread the truth upon the records of the Government; and undoubtedly it is due to General Taylor's memory, in any sketch that can be made, to quote some of the reasons

Digitized by Google

which have been offered so faithfully and which so amply justified him in the lenient course which he took with the Mexican general and those under his command. General Ampudia, though an able commander, had what our American Indians term "a forked tongue." His representations concerning the changes in the Mexican policy, about the time of his own surrender, appear to have sprung from his own inventive genius rather than from the facts in his possession; for Santa Anna, when he did come, was more strongly for war than his predecessors, and would not have been likely to have ordered a cessation of resistance or anything like it at Monterey. So that the readers of this biography may throw out of the account all that General Ampudia at the conference alleged, except to admit that his uncontradicted statements there made must have greatly influenced all the members of the Joint Commission in the construction of the terms of the capitulation; and, considering General Taylor's ever-present desire for an honorable peace, they must have softened his natural and usual desire for a completeness of surrender of any and every army that waged battle with him.

First, here are some notes of the Joint Commission:

"It is demonstrable, from the position and known prowess of the two armies, that we could drive the enemy from the town; but the town was untenable while the main fort (called the New Citadel) remained in the hands of the enemy. Being without siege artillery or intrenching tools, we could only hope to carry this fort by storm after a heavy loss from our army, which, isolated in a hostile country, now

Digitized by Google

numbered less than half the forces of the enemy. When all this had been achieved, what more would we have gained than by the capitulation?

"General Taylor's force was too small to invest the town. It was therefore always in the power of the enemy to retreat, bearing his light arms. Our army, poorly provided and with very insufficient transportation, could not have overtaken if they had pursued the flying enemy. Hence the conclusion that, as it was not in our power to capture the main body of the Mexican army, it is unreasonable to suppose their general would have surrendered at discretion. The moral effect of retiring under the capitulation was certainly greater than if the enemy had retired without our consent. By this course we secured the large supply of ammunition he had collected in Monterey, which, had the assault been continued, must have been exploded by our shells, as it was principally stored in the Cathedral, which, being supposed to be filled with troops, was the especial aim of our pieces. The destruction which this explosion would have produced must have involved the advance of both divisions of our troops; and I commend this to the contemplation of those whose arguments have been drawn from facts learned since the commissioners closed their negotiation."

But next, perhaps, General Taylor's own public letter contains the most complete and strongest answer to any apparently valid objections to his terms of capitulation:

"CAMP NEAR MONTEREY, *November* 8, 1846.

"SIR: In reply to so much of the communication of the Secretary of War as relates to the reasons

Digitized by Google

which induced the convention resulting in the capitulation of Monterey, I have the honor to submit the following remarks:

"The convention presents two distinct points: First, the permission granted the Mexican army to retire with their arms, etc.; secondly, the temporary cessation of hostilities for the term of eight weeks. I shall remark on these in order.

"The force with which I marched on Monterey was limited, by causes beyond my control, to about six thousand men. With this force, as every military man must admit who has seen the ground, it was entirely impossible to invest Monterey so closely as to prevent the escape of the garrison. Although the main communication with the interior was in our possession, yet one route was open to the Mexicans throughout the operations, and could not be closed, as were also other minor tracks and passes through the mountains. Had we, therefore, insisted on more rigorous terms than those granted, the result would have been the escape of the body of the Mexican force, with the destruction of its artillery and magazines, our only advantage being the capture of a few prisoners of war, at the expense of valuable lives and much damage to the city. The consideration of humanity was present to my mind during the conference which led to the convention, and outweighed, in my judgment, the doubtful advantages to be gained by a resumption of the attack upon the town. This conclusion has been fully confirmed by an inspection of the enemy's position and means since the surrender. It was discovered that his principal magazine, containing an immense amount of powder, was in the Cathedral, completely ex-

Digitized by Google

posed to our shells from two directions. The explosion of this mass of powder, which must have ultimately resulted from a continuance of the bombardment, would have been infinitely disastrous, involving the destruction not only of Mexican troops, but of non-combatants, and even our own people, had we pressed the attack.

"In regard to the temporary cessation of hostilities, the fact that we are not at this moment—within eleven days of the termination of the period fixed by the convention—prepared to move forward in force, is a sufficient explanation of the military reasons which dictated this suspension of arms. It paralyzed the enemy during a period when, from the want of necessary means, we could not possibly move. I desire distinctly to state, and to call the attention of the authorities to the fact, that, with all diligence in breaking mules and setting up wagons, the first wagons in addition to our original trains from Corpus Christi (and but one hundred and twenty-five in number) reached my headquarters on the same day with the Secretary's communication of October 13th, viz., the 2d inst. At the date of the surrender of Monterey our force had not more than ten days' rations; and even now, with all our endeavors, we have not more than twenty-five. The task of fighting and beating the enemy is among the least difficult that we encounter. The great question of supplies necessarily controls all the operations in a country like this. At the date of the convention I could not, of course, have foreseen that the Department would direct an important detachment from my command without consulting me, or without waiting the result of the main operations under my orders.

Digitized by Google

"I have touched the prominent military points involved in the convention of Monterey. There were other considerations which weighed with the commissioners in framing, and with myself in approving, the articles of the convention. In the conference with General Ampudia, I was distinctly told by him that he had invited it to spare the further effusion of blood, and because General Santa Anna had declared himself favorable to peace. I knew that our Government had made propositions to that of Mexico to negotiate, and I deemed that the change of government in that country since my last instructions, fully warranted me in entertaining considerations of policy. My grand motive in moving forward with very limited supplies had been to increase the inducements of the Mexican Government to negotiate for peace. Whatever may be the actual views or disposition of the Mexican rulers or of General Santa Anna, it is not unknown to the Government that I had the very best reason for believing the statement of General Ampudia to be true. It was my opinion at the time of the convention, and it has not been changed, that the liberal treatment of the Mexican army and the suspension of arms would exert none but a favorable influence in our behalf.

"The result of the entire operation has been to throw the Mexican army back more than three hundred miles to the city of San Luis Potosi, and to open the country to us as far as we choose to penetrate it up to the same point.

"It has been my purpose, in this communication, not so much to defend the convention from the censure which I deeply regret to find implied in the Sec-

Digitized by Google

retary's letter, as to show that it was not adopted without cogent reasons, most of which occur of themselves to the minds of all who are acquainted with the condition of things here. To that end I beg that it may be laid before the General-in-Chief and Secretary of War."

General Taylor, in a private letter dated Monterey, Mexico, November 5, 1846, wrote very fully upon the same subject—that is, of the terms of the surrender of Monterey. Extracts from this letter not only justify General Taylor's action, but show the goodness of his heart.

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION OR INVASION,
MONTEREY, MEXICO, *November* 5, 1846.

. . . . . .

"After considerable apparent delay on the part of the Quartermaster's Department in getting steamboats into the Rio Grande adapted to its navigation, I succeeded toward the latter part of August in throwing forward to Camargo (a town situated on the San Juan River three miles from its junction with the Rio Grande, on the west side, nearly five hundred miles from Brazos Island by water and two hundred by land, and one hundred and forty from this place), a considerable depot of provisions, ordnance, ammunition, and forage, and then, having brought together an important portion of my command, I determined on moving on this place. Accordingly, after collecting seventeen hundred pack-mules, with their attendants and conductors, in the enemy's country (the principal means of transportation for our provisions and baggage), I left, on the 5th of September, to join my advance, which had preceded me a few days to Seralvo, a small village

Digitized by Google

seventy-five miles on the route, which I did on the 9th, and, after waiting there a few days for some of the corps to get up, moved on and reached here on the 19th (September, 1846), with 6,250 men—2,700 regulars, the balance volunteers. For what took place afterwards I must refer you to several reports, particularly to my detailed one of the 9th ultimo. I do not believe the authorities at Washington are at all satisfied with my conduct in regard to the terms of capitulation entered into with the Mexican commander, which you no doubt have seen, as they have been made public through the official organ, and copied in various other newspapers. I have this moment received an answer (to my dispatch announcing the surrender of Monterey, and the circumstances attending the same) from the Secretary of War, stating that 'it was regretted by the President that it was not advisable to insist on the terms I had proposed in my communication to the Mexican commander in regard to giving up the city,' adding that 'the circumstances which dictated, no doubt justified the change.' Although the terms of capitulation may be considered too liberal on our part by the President and his advisers, as well as by many others at a distance, particularly by those who do not understand the position which we occupied, (otherwise they might come to different conclusion in regard to the matter), yet, on due reflection, I see nothing to induce me to regret the course I pursued.

"The proposition on the part of General Ampudia, which had much to do in determining my course in the matter, was based on the ground that our Government had proposed to his to settle ex-

Digitized by Google

isting difficulties by negotiation, (which I knew was the case, without knowing the result), which was then under consideration by the proper authorities, and which he (General Ampudia) had no doubt would result favorably, as the whole of his people were in favor of peace. If so, I considered the further effusion of blood not only unnecessary, but improper. Their force was also considerably larger than ours, and from the size and position of the place we could not completely invest it; so that the greater portion of their troops, if not the whole, had they been disposed to do so, could any night have abandoned the city at once, entered the mountain passes, and effected their retreat, do what we could! Had we been put to the alternative of taking the place by storm (which there is no doubt we should have succeeded in doing), we should in all probability have lost fifty or one hundred men in killed, besides the wounded, which I wished to avoid, as there appeared to be a prospect of peace; even if a distant one. I also wished to avoid the destruction of women and children, which must have been very great had the storming process been resorted to. Besides, they had a very large and strong fortification a short distance from the city, which, if carried with the bayonet, must have been taken at great sacrifice of life; and, with our limited train of heavy or battering artillery, it would have required twenty or twenty-five days to take it by regular approaches.

"That they should have surrendered a place nearly as strong as Quebec, well fortified under the direction of skillful engineers, their works garnished with forty-two pieces of artillery, abundantly supplied with ammunition, garrisoned by seven thou-

Digitized by Google

sand regulars and two thousand irregular troops, in addition to some thousand of citizens capable of, and no doubt actually, bearing arms and aiding in its defense, to an opposing force of half their number, scantily supplied with provisions, and with a light train of artillery, is among the unaccountable occurrences of the times.

"I am decidedly opposed to carrying the war beyond Saltillo in this direction, which place has been entirely abandoned by the Mexican forces, all of whom have been concentrated at San Luis Potosi; and I shall lose no time in taking possession of the former as soon as the cessation of hostilities referred to expires, which I have notified the Mexican authorities will close on the 13th instant by direction of the President of the United States.

"If we are (in the language of Mr. Polk and General Scott) under the necessity of 'conquering peace,' and that by taking the capital of the country, we must go to Vera Cruz, take that place, and then march on the city of Mexico. To do so in any other direction I consider out of the question. But, admitting that we conquer a peace by so doing, say at the end of the next twelve months, will the amount of blood and treasure, which must be expended in doing so, be compensated by the same? I think not, especially if the country we subdue is to be given up; and I imagine there are but few individuals in our country who think of annexing Mexico to the United States.

"I do not intend to carry on my operations (as previously stated) beyond Saltillo, deeming it next to impracticable to do so. It then becomes a question as to what is best to be done. It seems to

Digitized by Google

me the most judicious course to be pursued on our part would be to take possession at once of the line we would accept by negotiation, extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific, and occupy the same, or keep what we already have possession of; and that, with Tampico (which I hope to take in the course of next month, or as soon as I can get the means of transportation), will give us all on this side of the Sierra Madre, and, as soon as I occupy Saltillo, will include six or seven states or provinces, thus holding Tampico, Vittoria, Monterey, Saltillo, Monclova, Chihuahua (which I presume General Wool has possession of by this time), Santa Fé, and the Californias, and say to Mexico, 'Drive us from the country!' throwing on her the responsibility and expense of carrying on offensive war, at the same time closely blockading all her ports on the Pacific and on the Gulf. A course of this kind, if persevered in for a short time, would soon bring her to her proper senses, and compel her to sue for peace, provided there is a government in the country sufficiently stable for us to treat with, which I fear will hardly be the case for many years to come. Without large re-enforcements of volunteers from the United States, say ten or fifteen thousand (those previously sent out having already been greatly reduced by sickness and other casualties), I do not believe it would be advisable to march beyond Saltillo, which is more than two hundred miles beyond our depots on the Rio Grande, a very long line on which to keep up supplies (over a land route in a country like this) for a large force, and certain to be attended with an expense which it will be frightful to contemplate when closely looked into.

Digitized by Google

"From Saltillo to San Luis Potosi, the next place of importance on the road to the city of Mexico, is three hundred miles, one hundred and forty badly watered, where no supplies of any kind could be procured for men or horses. I have informed the War Department that twenty thousand efficient men would be necessary to insure success if we move on that place (a city containing a population of sixty thousand, where the enemy could bring together and sustain, besides the citizens, an army of fifty thousand), a force which I apprehend will hardly be collected by us, with the train necessary to feed it, as well as to transport various other supplies, particularly ordnance and munitions of war.

"In regard to the armistice, which would have expired by limitation in a few days, we lost nothing by it, as we could not move even now had the enemy continued to occupy Saltillo; for, strange to say, the first wagon that has reached me since the declaration of war was on the 2d instant, the same day on which I received from Washington an acknowledgment of my dispatch announcing the taking of Monterey, and then I received only one hundred and twenty-five; so that I have been since May last completely crippled, and am still so, for want of transportation. After raking and scraping the country for miles around Camargo, collecting every pack-mule and other means of transportation, I could bring here only eighty thousand rations (fifteen days' supply), with a moderate supply of ordnance, ammunition, etc., to do which all the corps had to leave behind a portion of their camp equipage necessary for their comfort, and in some instances, among the volunteers, their personal baggage. I moved in such

Digitized by Google

a way and with such limited means that, had I not succeeded, I should no doubt have been severely reprimanded, if nothing worse. I did so to sustain the administration.

. . . . . .

"Of the two regiments of mounted men from Tennessee and Kentucky who left their respective States to join me in June, the latter has just reached Camargo; the former had not got to Matamoros at the latest dates from there. Admitting that they will be as long in returning as in getting here (to say nothing of the time necessary to recruit their horses), and were to be discharged in time to reach their homes, they could serve in Mexico but a very short time. The foregoing remarks are not made with the view of finding fault with any one, but to point out the difficulties with which I have had to contend.

"Monterey, the capital of New Leon, is situated on the San Juan River where it comes out of the mountains, the city (which contains a population of about twelve thousand) being in part surrounded by them, at the head of a large and beautiful valley. The houses are of stone, in the Moorish style, with flat roofs, which, with their strongly inclosed gardens in high stone walls all looped for musketry, make them each a fortress within itself. It is the most important place in northern Mexico or on the east side of the Sierra Madre, commanding the only pass or road for carriages from this side, between it and the Gulf of Mexico to the table-lands of the Sierra, by or through which the city of Mexico can be reached.

"I much fear that I shall have exhausted your

Digitized by Google

patience before you get half through this long and uninteresting letter. If so, you can only commit it to the flames and think no more about it, as I write in great haste, besides being interrupted every five minutes; so that you must make great allowances for blots, interlineations, and blunders, as well as want of connection in many parts of the same.

"Be so good as to present me most kindly to your excellent lady; and accept my sincere wishes for your continued health, prosperity, and fame.

"I remain, truly and sincerely, your friend,

"Z. TAYLOR."

Considering the length of the operations at Monterey—a partial siege we may call them—and the many combats of Taylor's troops, including the assaults upon forts, bridge-heads, and redoubts, besides those upon the stone walls of public buildings, private courts, and dwelling-houses, and for the most part at each point of attack carried on against equal or superior numbers, it is surprising to find the casualties so few. Taylor's entire loss, after he came in sight of the city, was but one hundred and thirty-three officers and men killed, and three hundred and ninety-eight officers and men wounded and missing.

It is always a difficult task for a commander properly to discriminate with reference to those under him in action so as to award praise or blame with justice, and give to those concerned anything like adequate satisfaction. General Taylor's efforts in this respect, in all his reports now recorded, are models. After the battle of Monterey he commences his commendation—for here it is only commendation—of

Digitized by Google

both regulars and volunteers, in this graceful expression: "I am proud to bear testimony to their coolness and constancy in battle, and the cheerfulness with which they have submitted to exposure and privation." He evidently took sufficient time to consider the reported conduct of every officer, besides those whom he himself noticed in the field. So that we have here a beautiful record from the three division commanders to the humblest lieutenant who served in the army of occupation.

From this long list there are very few who lived who did not also gain great distinction in the war of the rebellion of 1861 to 1865. He exercises a similar care in the enumeration of the deeds of the non-commissioned officers, and refers feelingly to the reports of sub-commanders, of which one historian says:

(These reports) "must therefore close the record of personal merit which shone forth on that memorable occasion—memorable not only in the annals of America, but in the records of modern warfare. . . ." He further says: "Commentary can not magnify the luster of such an achievement. If it is right and reasonable to applaud actions involving of necessity the infliction of misery and the sacrifice of life, the capture of Monterey is one to command unqualified admiration."

In the preliminary march, during the operations of the partial siege, in his instructions to the joint commission, and in all his reports and letters, General Zachary Taylor showed his usual sterling qualities; for example: 1. In setting out upon the march with so few troops, and so poorly supported by the supply departments, he evinced decided boldness, with great confidence in himself and his men.

Digitized by Google

2. His quick appreciation of the situation at Monterey; and entering at once upon the best practicable plan of attack, and carrying it on unflinchingly against vastly superior numbers, show, at every stage, the sterling firmness and persistency of the man.

3. His tenderness of heart, in the face of his indomitable action, was constantly brought out; he had too much humanity to admit of the sacrifice of life for any uncertain issue. His own declaration has a sincere and dignified appearance. He writes: "The consideration of humanity was present to my mind during the conference which led to the convention, and outweighed, in my judgment, the doubtful advantage to be gained by the resumption of the attack upon the town." How soon he apprehended the immense loss of life that would have followed an attempt to assault or evacuate the town by the enemy, and particularly from the almost certain explosion of the great powder magazine, dealing death to friend and foe alike, and slaying perhaps thousands of innocent women and children!

4. The objections to his extended cessation from hostilities have long since redounded to Taylor's good judgment; for it required time to prepare for a new campaign, and hostilities are always, especially in time of preparation, a serious, disturbing factor.

5. No one who reviews this campaign can fail to see that much of General Taylor's success was obtained in spite of bad treatment from senior authority. It seems now to be almost incredible that the necessary transportation and supplies should have been so long held back; and no one can fail to believe that rivalry or jealousy was at the bottom of the policy which detached from General Taylor a

Digitized by Google

large proportion of his command without even consulting him. Still, his complaints are never fretful, but always reasonable and dignified in their statement.

6. Another notable feature is the good influence of General Taylor's lenient conduct upon the Mexican mind; and who can tell what might have been the result had his wise counsels been more fully followed. His letters concerning the future conduct of the whole campaign are written with large capacity, practical good sense, and honest, patriotic fervor.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

New Washington plans—Reduction of force—Santa Anna and Paredes—Hon. William L. Marcy's letter to Taylor—Taylor's occupation deemed a blessing—More fault-finding—Taylor's official replies—General Wool's column—The new line.

We may pause here to notice the effect upon General Taylor and his career of the new plans emanating from Washington. General Taylor's operations at Monterey had reduced his army to about fifty-five hundred men, and as soon as they became comparatively idle in the climate of Mexico there was a further reduction on account of sickness. Certainly it was impracticable to move by this Monterey route much farther into the interior, unless there could be established a series of depots and sub-depots well guarded. The line was already one hundred and fifty miles in length from the Rio Grande. There had been several attempts on the part of our administration to secure terms of settlement with the Mexicans by peaceable measures. By September, 1846, the promises of Santa Anna, who had come to replace Paredes as President and commander of the army, had proved futile. With a view to placing before the reader the attitude of our Government at this time, it may be well to quote from the able instructions of the Hon. William L. Marcy, given from Washington in a communication to Gen. Taylor, the 22d of September,

Digitized by Google

particularly those with regard to living on the country:

"Public opinion," he writes, "it is to be presumed, will have some influence upon the decision of that [the Mexican] Congress. The progress of our arms, and the positions we may occupy when that body shall come together, can not fail to have effect upon its action in regard to our proposal to negotiate. Should the campaign be successful, and our troops be in possession of important departments of the enemy's country, the inducement for a speedy peace will be greatly strengthened.

"It is far from being certain that our military occupation of the enemy's country is not a blessing to the inhabitants in the vicinity. They are shielded from the burdens and exactions of their own authorities, protected in their persons, and furnished with a most profitable market for most kinds of their property. A state of things so favorable to their interests may induce them to wish the continuance of hostilities.

"The instructions *heretofore* given have required you to treat with great kindness the people, to respect private property, and to abstain from appropriating it to the public use without purchase at a fair price. In some respects this is going far beyond the common requirements of civilized warfare. An invading army has the unquestionable right to draw its supplies from the enemy *without paying for them*, and to require contributions for its support. It may be proper, and good policy requires, that discriminations should be made in imposing these burdens. Those who are friendly disposed, or contribute aid, should be treated with liberality; yet the enemy may be made to feel

Digitized by Google

the weight of the war, and thereby become interested to use their best efforts to bring about a state of peace.

"It is also but just that a nation which is involved in a war, to obtain justice or to maintain its just rights, should shift the burden of it, as far as practicable, from itself by throwing it upon the enemy.

"Upon the liberal principles of civilized warfare, either of three modes may be pursued in relation to obtaining supplies from the enemy: first, to purchase them on such terms as the inhabitants of the country may choose to exact; second, to pay a fair price without regard to the enhanced value resulting from the presence of a foreign army; and, third, to require them as contributions, without paying or engaging to pay therefor.

"The last mode is the ordinary one, and you are instructed to adopt it, if in that way you are satisfied you can get abundant supplies for your forces; but should you apprehend a difficulty in this respect, then you will adopt the policy of paying the ordinary price, without allowing to the owners the advantages of the enhancement of the price resulting from the increased demand. Should you apprehend a deficiency under this last mode of dealing with the inhabitants, you will be obliged to submit to their exactions, provided by this mode you can supply your wants on better terms than by drawing what you need from the United States. Should you attempt to supply your troops by contributions, or the appropriation of private property, you will be careful to exempt the property of all foreigners from any and all exactions whatsoever. The President hopes you will be able to derive from the enemy's country,

Digitized by Google

without expense to the United States, the supplies you may need, or a considerable part of them; but should you fail in this, you will procure them in the most economical manner."

Mr. Marcy further states: "It is proposed to take possession of the Department of Tamaulipas, or some of the principal places in it, at the earliest practicable period. In this enterprise it is believed that a co-operation of our squadron in the Gulf will be important, if not necessary. It is presumed that a force of about three or four thousand men will be sufficient for this purpose—one third of which should be of the regular army.

"We have not now sufficiently accurate knowledge of the country to determine definitely as to the manner of conducting this enterprise. The dangerous navigation of the Gulf at this season of the year induces the hope that a column may be advanced by land from the present base of operations—the Rio Grande; and that it may have an occasional communication with our ships in the Gulf. Should this land route be adjudged impracticable, or a debarkation be preferred, *two points of landing* have been suggested, one at the Bay of Santander and the other at Tampico. If a force be landed at the Bay of Santander, or in the vicinity of Soto la Marina, it could probably reach, without much difficulty, some of the principal places in the Department of Tamaulipas, and march to and take possession of Tampico. While the route is yet open to be settled, as a better knowledge of the country may indicate, it is proper to speak more in detail of the force to be employed in this service.

"It is not proposed to withdraw any of that now

Digitized by Google

with you in your advance into the interior, nor to divert any of the re-enforcements that you may need to carry on your operations in that quarter. It is believed that a sufficient force of the regular army for this expedition—about one regiment—may be drawn from the seaboard, including such companies as may have been left on the lower Rio Grande, and can be spared for that purpose. If a column should advance beyond the river into the interior of Tamaulipas, a part of the troops now on that line might, it is presumed, be safely withdrawn to augment the invading column. It is not, however, intended to weaken the force on that line any further than it can, in your opinion, be safely done.

"It is also proposed to put the force for the invasion of Tamaulipas under the immediate command of Major-General Patterson, to be accompanied by Brigadier-Generals Pillow and Shields, unless it should interfere with your previous arrangement with regard to these officers. To prevent delay, General Patterson will be directed to make preparations for this movement, so far as it can be done without disturbing your present arrangements on the Rio Grande, and proceed immediately and without further orders from the Department, unless you should be of opinion that the withdrawal of the force proposed for this expedition would interfere with your operations. This direction is given to General Patterson, because the time necessary to receive information from you and return an answer from the Department may be the propitious moment for operating with effect. The movement ought to be made with the least possible delay consistently with the health of the troops. It will be left to General

Digitized by Google

Patterson, under your instructions, to decide whether the movement shall be by land or sea, or partly by each. It is desired that you should give him your views in regard to the best mode of prosecuting this expedition, particularly as to the amount and description of force, and the quantity and kind of ordnance which may be required. Preparatory arrangements will be immediately ordered here for fitting out the expedition therein proposed, by which transports and provisions will be in readiness at the Brazos Santiago. By the time this communication will be received by you, it is expected that you will have reached Monterey, and perhaps Saltillo, and be able to present to the Department a satisfactory opinion of your ability to progress beyond that point. We shall anxiously look for information from you. Your advance to San Luis Potosi, if practicable, is rendered greatly more important by the movement contemplated to Tampico, by which you will, it is believed, be enabled to effect a co-operation with the squadron, and with the column under Major-General Patterson, on a line in advance of the Rio Grande. The squadron is now under orders to attack Tampico, with every prospect of success, and the probability is that the place will be captured in advance of General Patterson's movement."

By a careful reading of these instructions and what follows, and by the orders sent to General Patterson and other officers, it was made plain to General Taylor that the President and his Cabinet were not pleased with the terms of his capitulation at Monterey. They especially demurred at the prolonged armistice. Here are some of the expressions

Digitized by Google

of regret. Mr. Marcy says: "By the arrangements you have made for a temporary suspension of hostilities within certain limits of the enemy's country, if continued to the end of the time stipulated, a considerable part of Tamaulipas will be exempted from military operations until within a few days of the time fixed for the meeting of the Mexican Congress, and the expedition—that is, the one projected to Tampico—thereby delayed, or, if prosecuted by the land or naval forces, might bring into question the good faith of the United States. . . . It is an object of much interest to the Government to be put in possession of your views as to your future operations."

A little after, something beyond the Tampico project Mr. Marcy reveals to Taylor, when he says: "It is under consideration by the Government, though not yet fully determined, to land a considerable force in the vicinity of Vera Cruz and invest that city. Should this be undertaken, a larger force of regular troops will be required than that assigned to the Tamaulipas expedition. It is desired to know if, in your opinion, a detachment of two thousand of this description of force can be spared for that purpose from those under your command, without essentially interfering with your plans and operations. It is not designed or intended to weaken the force with you at Monterey, or to embarrass you by diverting troops from the Rio Grande, which you may deem necessary as reinforcements to the execution of your own contemplated operations."

General Taylor appears to have answered, early in October, that he could not, consistent with good faith, detach a force and send it south of a line running through Linares to San Fernando. A little

Digitized by Google

later, the 15th of October, the general was aroused by a sort of undercurrent of dissatisfaction in the communications which he received. There is nothing that hurts the feelings of a general so much as such a tone of fault-finding and unfavorable criticism, coming in letter after letter, and reflected in all the public press of the country, where he had rightfully expected and really deserved only commendation. The following letter, written under just these circumstances, speaks for itself:

"HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF OCCUPATION,
CAMP NEAR MONTEREY, *October* 15, 1846.

"SIR: In my acknowledgment, dated the 12th instant, of the instructions of the Secretary of War of September 22d, I briefly stated that the detachment to Tampico could not be made without contravening the convention at Monterey. Other reasons, and more detailed views on this point and the general question of the campaign, I left to a subsequent communication, which I have now the honor to submit for the information of the General-in-Chief and the Secretary of War. Such a point has been reached in the conduct of the war and the progress of our arms as to make it proper to place my impressions and convictions very fully before the Government.

"I wish to remark, first of all, that I have considered Brigadier-General Wool, though formally under my orders, yet as charged by the Government with a distinct operation, with which I was not at liberty to interfere. Though greatly in doubt as to the practicability of his reaching Chihuahua with artillery, and deeming the importance of the operation, at any rate, to be not at all commensurate with its

Digitized by Google

difficulty and expense, I have accordingly refrained from controlling his movements in any way. His force, therefore, forms no element in my calculations, particularly as it is now, or soon will be, entirely beyond my reach.

"The Mexican army under General Ampudia has left Saltillo and fallen back on San Luis Potosi—the last detachment, as I understand, being under orders to march to-day. General Santa Anna reached San Luis on the 8th instant, and is engaged in concentrating and organizing the army at that point. Whether the withdrawal of the forces to San Luis be intended to draw us into the country, far from supplies and support, or whether it be a political movement, connected with Santa Anna's return to power, it is impossible to say; it is sufficient for my present argument to know that a heavy force is assembling in our front. Saltillo, the capital of Coahuila, is virtually in our possession, and can be occupied, if necessary, the moment the convention is at an end. The occupation of Saltillo will lengthen our line seventy-five miles, but, on the other hand, may enable us to draw at least a portion of our breadstuffs from the country. San Luis is about three hundred miles from Saltillo, perhaps more.

San Luis is a city of some sixty thousand inhabitants, in a country abundant in resources, and at no great distance from the heart of the Republic, whence munitions of war and reinforcements can readily be drawn. It is at the same time nearly six hundred miles from the Rio Grande, which must continue to be the base of our operations, at least until we reach San Luis.

"In view of the above facts, I hazard nothing in

Digitized by Google

saying that a column to move on San Luis from Saltillo should, to insure success, be at least twenty thousand strong, of which ten thousand should be regular troops. After much reflection, I consider the above as the smallest number of *effective* troops that could be employed on this service without incurring the hazard of disaster, and perhaps defeat. There would be required, besides, to keep open our long line, protect the depots, and secure the country already gained, a force of five thousand men—this, without including the force necessary to send to Tampico to take or hold that place.

"The above estimate may seem large, when it is remembered that important results have been gained with a much smaller force; but we have hitherto operated near our own base, and the Mexicans at a great distance from theirs. Saltillo may be considered about equidistant from the Rio Grande and San Luis. Every day's march beyond it lengthens our already long line and curtails theirs—weakens us and gives them strength. Hence the movement should not be undertaken except with a force so large as to render success certain.

"In the above calculations I have supposed the Mexicans able to concentrate at San Luis a force of forty thousand to fifty thousand men. With tolerable stability in the Government, I doubt not their ability to do this, and it is not safe to assume any less number as a basis. The force of twelve months' volunteers has suffered greatly from disease. Many have died, and a great number have been discharged for disability. So much has their effective strength been reduced by this cause and present sickness that, in the absence of official returns, I am satisfied

Digitized by Google

that five hundred men per regiment would be a large average of *effectives* among the volunteers. This would give, including the cavalry, a force a little short of nine thousand men, or, adding four thousand regulars (our present strength is not three thousand), a total force of thirteen thousand. Leaving the very moderate number of three thousand to secure our rear, I should not be able to march from Saltillo, with present and expected means, at the head of more than ten thousand men—a number which, from considerations above stated, I deem to be entirely inadequate.

"And now I come to the point presented in the Secretary's letters. A simultaneous movement on San Luis and Tampico is there suggested; but it will readily be seen that, with only half the force which I consider necessary to march on one point, it is quite impossible to march on both, and that nothing short of an effective force of twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand men would, on military principles, justify the doube movement. And it is to be remarked that the possession of Tampico is indispensable in case we advance to San Luis, for the line hence to the latter place is entirely too long to be maintained permanently, and must be abandoned for the shorter one from Tampico the moment San Luis is taken.

"I have spoken only of the number of troops deemed necessary for the prosecution of the campaign beyond Saltillo. It will be understood that largely increased means and material of every kind will be equally necessary to render the army efficient —such as cavalry and artillery horses, means of transportation, ordnance stores, etc.

"The Department may be assured that the above

Digitized by Google

views have not been given without mature reflection, and have been the result of experience and careful inquiry. It will be for the Government to determine whether the war shall be prosecuted by directing an active campaign against San Luis and the capital, or whether the country already gained shall be held, and a defensive attitude assumed. In the latter case, the general line of the Sierra Madre might very well be taken; but even then, with the enemy in force in my front, it might be imprudent to detach to Tampico so large a force as three thousand or four thousand men, particularly of the description required for that operation. If the co-operation of the army, therefore, be deemed essential to the success of the expedition against Tampico, I trust that it will be postponed for the present.

"I have not been unmindful of the importance of taking Tampico, and have at least once addressed the Department on the subject. Nothing but the known exposure of the place to the ravages of the yellow fever prevented me from organizing an expedition against it last summer. I knew that, if taken, it could not with any certainty be held, and that the cause would not be removed before the last of November or the first of December.

"It may be expected that I would give my views as to the policy of occupying a defensive line, to which I have above alluded. I am free to confess that, in view of the difficulties and expense attending a movement into the heart of the country, and particularly in view of the unsettled and revolutionary character of the Mexican Government, the occupation of such a line seems to me the best course that can be adopted. The line taken might either be that

Digitized by Google

on which we propose to insist as the boundary between the republics—say, the Rio Grande—or the line to which we have advanced—viz., the Sierra Madre, including Chihuahua and Santa Fe. The former line could be held with a much smaller force than the latter; but even the line of the Sierra Madre could be held with a force greatly less than would be required for an active campaign. Monterey controls the great outlet from the interior; a strong garrison at this point, with an advance at Saltillo, and small corps at Monclova, Linares, Victoria, and Tampico, would effectually cover the line.

"I have limited my remarks to the position of the army on this frontier, and the requirements of a campaign against San Luis Potosi, the suggestions in the Secretary's letter being confined to this general theatre of operations. Should the Government determine to strike a decisive blow at Mexico, it is my opinion that the force should land near Vera Cruz or Alvarado, and, after establishing a secure depot, march thence on the capital. The amount of troops required for this service would not fall short, in my judgment, of twenty-five thousand men, of which at least ten thousand should be regular troops.

"In conclusion, I feel it my duty to make some remarks which I would gladly have been spared the necessity of submitting. I feel it due to my position, and to the service, to record my protest against the manner in which the Department has sought to make an important detachment from my command, specifically indicating not only the general officers, but, to a considerable extent, the troops that were to compose it. While I remain in command of the army against Mexico, and am therefore justly held

Digitized by Google

responsible by the Government and the country for the conduct of its operations, I must claim the right of organizing all detachments from it, and regulating the time and manner of their service. Above all do I consider it important that the Department of War should refrain from corresponding directly with my subordinates, and communicating orders and instructions on points which, by all military precept and practice, pertain exclusively to the general in chief command. Confusion and disaster alone can result from such a course. The reason alleged—viz., the loss of time in communicating with General Patterson—has no application; for the Secretary's dispatch came from that office to my headquarters in sixty hours, and he could not move, at any rate, without drawing largely upon this column for artillery and regular troops.

"I beg it may be understood that my remarks have no personal application. It is quite probable that, in the event of making such a detachment, I would have placed it under Major-General Patterson; but I conceive that this mode of regulating details, and ordering detachments direct from the Department of War, is a violation of the integrity of the chief command in the field, pregnant with the worst evils, and against which I deem it my duty respectfully but earnestly to protest. I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR,

"*Major-General U. S. A., commanding.*

"THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE ARMY, *Washington, D. C.*"

This dignified communication exhibits the manliness and ability of the writer, and shows how nearly his views, without any consultation whatever with

Digitized by Google

him, coincided in the main with those of General Winfield Scott. That idea of living upon the country originated outside of the country itself. The whole region near the Sierra Madre was too desolate and unproductive to warrant any extraordinary foraging, so that only partial supply could be counted on. They had secured the simplest food—viz., bread and meat—by prompt cash payments, and at very reasonable figures; and General Taylor believed, and with reason, that should a system of armed enforcement be introduced—that is, to take provisions without pay—the people of the country, sympathizing with their own Government, would plant fewer crops, or destroy what they had. So that it was in no spirit of weak opposition that he insisted for the time upon purchasing and having the means of purchase. In one letter the good general remarks: "Should the army in its future operations reach a portion of the country which can be made to supply the provisions with advantage, I shall not fail to conform to the wishes and instructions of the Department in this particular."

Just as soon as President Polk decided against the length of the armistice, he communicated with General Taylor, and so, as speedily as possible, the Mexican commanders were notified that hostilities would be resumed on the 13th of November.

With a view to comprehend the whole situation in that Tamaulipas region at this date, we remark that General Wool was in command of another column, already alluded to, moving under information which did not prove reliable or practicable, aiming to reach and hold the province of Chihuahua, and striking for its central city. He left San Antonio on Sep-

Digitized by Google

tember 28, crossing the Rio Grande at the Presidio, and by November 3 his forces had reached Monclova. Wool had principally volunteers from Arkansas, Illinois, and Kentucky, two batteries of regular artillery; having with them six field-guns—in all about twenty-five hundred men. As General Taylor, in camp at Monterey, was facing southward, this force was now to his rear some seventy-five miles distant; so that when General Wool reported to him, it was a long line that he was holding, or soon to hold, with not to exceed six thousand men—a line extending from Monclova through Saltillo and Vittoria to Tampico on the Gulf. Of course, Monterey had to be firmly held as a depot and most important strategic point in any event for Taylor's operations.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVI.

Planning to take Saltillo—Worth's division on the lead—General Worth's column—Its line of march—José Maria's letter—Mexican feeling—Worth and Taylor meet—Return to Monterey—Patterson's movements approved by Taylor—General Scott comes to the front—Secretary of War writes—Taylor replies, and makes just complaints—Scott's good letter—Remarks eulogistic of two remarkable heroes.

As soon as Taylor felt strong enough, the armistice having been terminated, and being notified of the position of General Wool at Monclova, and also being assured that Wool would now form part of his active command, he decided to move forward and at least take Saltillo. He had briefly recorded his reasons. Substantially, he said: First, Saltillo is a necessary outpost for Monterey, standing, as it does, near the issue of the defile that passes from the lower lands to the lofty table-lands. Second, it is near the route from Monclova, so that a hostile force at Saltillo would prevent strategic connection with Wool's force. Third, it held open a region filled with cattle, breadstuffs, and other supplies; it made the fertile country around Parras available to his army. Fourth, it was the capital of the province of Coahuila, a point essential to take and keep, from its civil as well as its military importance.

That General Taylor did not at this time—that is,

Digitized by Google

early in November, 1846—contemplate any ambitious forward movement into the heart of the country—say, to San Luis Potosi—is evident from an expression in a dispatch: "I consider," he avers, "the occupation of that point" (Saltillo) "as a necessary complement to our operations, and to the policy of holding a defensive line, as the Sierra Madre, and trust the Department will concur with me in this view." It was as if one said, To keep back the sea, the dyke is the barrier; but the dyke would avail little without holding in strength and repair the principal gate. The mountain range was a good dyke against the waves of Mexican hordes; but Saltillo, the capital, furnished the gate of ingress. There is another idea that the thoughtful general ever bore in mind, that the left of his new strategic line was Tampico on the Gulf. He already planned to push forward sufficient forces, if he could possibly ever get them in hand, to take first Vittoria and then Tampico. For the latter enterprise he could, as we have seen, undoubtedly count upon co-operation from the navy, and other direct aid from the War Department.

On November 12th General Taylor started Worth's division for that important capital of the province. Worth had two regular regiments of infantry, eight companies of artillery that acted as infantry, eight pieces of field artillery, and one good company of volunteers, having in this small detachment an aggregate of about two thousand effectives. General Wool, who had asked for orders, was instructed by General Taylor to remain at Monclova till he (Taylor) could consider the situation from the new standpoint of Saltillo. The next day, the 13th, he took two squadrons of dragoons for escort and

Digitized by Google

put himself on the road. The entire distance from Monterey to Saltillo is sixty-five miles. The way is rough enough, but picturesque and comfortable, for horsemen. He had hardly come within the borders of the classic land of Coahuila when he was met by a courier from the Governor, who was still at Saltillo. The courier took to General Taylor a brief communication, which should form a part of this story. It is as follows:

"SALTILLO, *November* 16, 1846.

"GOD AND LIBERTY!

"The movement you are making with the forces under your command leaves no doubt that your object is to invade this city, as have been the greater part of the towns of Coahuila by the troops which have advanced to Monclova. The want of arms in this State leaves me no means to oppose force to force, and will enable you to occupy this capital without opposition, and compel me to retire from it; but in doing so, I ought and I desire to place upon record, in the most authentic manner, this protest, which I solemnly make, in the name of the State of Coahuila, against the Government of the United States of the North for the usurpation of the territory occupied by their arms, for the outrages and damages which may accrue to the persons and property of the inhabitants of these defenseless towns, for the injuries the public interests may suffer, and for all the evils consequent upon the most unjustifiable invasion ever known to the world.

"JOSÉ MARIA DE AGUIRRE.

"MAJOR-GENERAL TAYLOR,

"*General-in-Chief of the Army of the United States.*"

Digitized by Google

José Aguirre was right in his interpretation of the intentions of General Taylor; and really, in this brief paper, he set forth the common feeling among the Mexicans of that time touching General Taylor's whole campaign, as "the most unjustifiable invasion ever known to the world." Yet probably to-day nearly the universal sentiment is the other way; for to the permanently acquired parts of Old Mexico—viz., California, Arizona, New Mexico—there have come all the blessings and prosperity of the most favorable parts of the world, and to the unsevered States the improvements are wonderful, and good fortune has resulted directly and indirectly to all of Mexico from that war of invasion. The causes may have been insufficient, and the motive of war on the part of the Administration may have been wrong, yet, as it was with the sale of Joseph, the son of the patriarch, to the Egyptians, the Lord has overruled the acts to the benefit of the actors and mankind.

Educated as General Taylor had been for years in frontier conflicts, battles with the Indians, and in active campaigning of two wars, his conscience conformed readily to the situation. He had done what he believed to be his plain duty. He went where he was ordered by his Government to go. He fought the battles that this obedience brought; and after the Mexicans had declared war, he pushed the war, never violating its rules, and inclining strongly to the side of humanity. He nevertheless, from his nature as well as purpose, pushed an offensive campaign when it was necessitated with unparalleled vigor, and then, holding the conquered territory with tenacity, cherished a hope that our forces would be able speedily to conquer an honorable peace. Such

Digitized by Google

being his character and his principles, he carefully read the protest of the Governor of Coahuila without for an instant delaying his march. That very day in which the letter was written General Worth had entered Saltillo without a combat. Here, a little later, General Taylor himself joined him.

The city of Parras is on the road from Monclova, about sixty miles distant from Saltillo; in fact, Monterey, Parras, and Saltillo form nearly an equilateral triangle; so that it was natural, after an examination of the country, for General Taylor to bring Wool's force forward to Parras. This would enable the general to cover by his garrisons and his scouting parties vastly more of the rich country of that table-land. In a couple of days, by easy marches, he could bring General Wool to his own support, or move him farther forward in case of need. For these reasons General Wool was posted at Parras. Having thoroughly reconnoitered the whole front, and gathered all the information with reference to any hostile plans in his vicinity, General Taylor, to better attend to his whole field of operations, returned to Monterey, taking only half of his cavalry escort with him. General Worth required the remainder for the purpose of watching his extensive front.

Soon after his arrival at Monterey, General Taylor discovered that his plans with reference to Tampico had already been anticipated by the navy, and that, on November 14th, Commodore Perry with his naval squadron had seized and was holding that port. General Patterson, who was at the time commanding in the valley of the Rio Grande, received a letter from the naval commander requesting that he

Digitized by Google

furnish sufficient troops to make Tampico secure. General Patterson at once sent to him six companies of infantry, and went on without special authority to transport by sea the requisite provisions—that is, guns, ammunition, and other supplies. This action was at once reported to his own commander, General Taylor, and received his prompt and hearty approval; and, to make matters doubly secure, Taylor directed him, as soon as possible, to increase the force by an entire regiment of volunteers.

At this juncture of events the field of operations in Mexico was suddenly enlarged, and the senior major-general of the army, General Winfield Scott, was made to bear a most important part in the further prosecution of the war. In one of the eulogies upon General Scott soon after his death are to be found a few expressions, which, in a proper estimation of his character, appear to be explicit and exact: "General Scott was throughout his long life conscientious in the discharge not only of his official but of his social and religious duties. . . . His devotion to his conscientious convictions could not have been better illustrated than by his conduct at different times in preventing the outbreaking of war between his own and another country. . . . General Scott was an intrepid man, but only in a just cause; he was impetuous, but only in assaulting the base and unworthy; he was a proud man, but he respected authority; he was ambitious, but only of an honorable renown. . . . He was one of the most vigorous and amply and variously endowed of our public men. In the course of a long life he was frequently applauded, and once hailed pacificator and once savior of his country; yet he was content and proud

Digitized by Google

to be thought—what in truth and in the highest sense he was—a Christian gentleman." The writer subscribes very fully to this estimate of General Winfield Scott, so that he repudiates at once any statements going to show that in the year 1846 General Scott planned or proposed to carry out the plans of others against his lifelong friend and fellow-soldier, General Zachary Taylor, who had but lately attained to Scott's army grade.

It may be wise, just here, to set forth a few plain facts which will show the cordial relationship of these two great men at this time, and how it came about that when Scott entered upon his campaign—which only ended at the City of Mexico—he so depleted the army of General Taylor that the latter was left much crippled, and ostensibly on the defensive; but even for that, with too few troops to guard the doors of approach against any considerable force which the new Mexican President and General, Santa Anna, might bring against him.

When requested by his Commander-in-Chief—the President of the United States—to submit a plan of operations which should, in his opinion, result in the conquering of a peace with Mexico, General Scott had at once obeyed the instructions, and furnished to the President a clear and explicit paper that indicated the plans, the forces, and the material essential to a complete and vigorous offensive campaign. Herein Scott, as was his wont, covered the whole ground. About November 18, 1846, orders were sent to him to proceed to Vera Cruz and take the immediate command of the army in the field. The designs of the Administration were not only made known to General Scott, but also by Mr. Marcy, the

Digitized by Google

Secretary of War, to General Taylor. Some extracts from the Secretary's letter, dated October 22d, are essential to this history. He first indicated to General Taylor that it had been determined that, so soon as Tampico had been taken, an organized attempt would be made to effect a lodgment at Vera Cruz. He then went on to say: "If the expedition could go forth without the object being known to the enemy, it is supposed that four thousand troops would be sufficient for the enterprise, receiving, as they would, the co-operation of our naval force in the gulf; but *at least fifteen hundred or two thousand of them should be of the regular army, and under the command of officers best calculated for such an undertaking.* In looking at the disposition of the troops, *it appears to be scarcely possible to get the requisite number of regulars without drawing some of those now with you at Monterey*, or on the way to that place. Should you decide against holding military possession of any place in Coahuila or Chihuahua, and order the troops under General Wool to join you, it is presumed that the requisite force for the expedition to Vera Cruz could be detached without interfering with your plans of operation. You will therefore, unless it materially interferes with your own plan of operations, or weakens you too much in your present position, make the necessary arrangements for having four thousand men, of whom fifteen hundred or two thousand should be regular troops, ready to embark for Vera Cruz, or such other destination as may be given them, at the earliest practicable period. The place of embarkation will probably be the Brazos Santiago, or in that vicinity."

The next day Mr. Marcy wrote General Scott.

Digitized by Google

After detailing a little of the object of the expedition, he proceeded to say: "It is not proposed to control your operations by definite and positive instructions, but you are left to prosecute them as your judgment, under a full view of the circumstances, shall dictate. The work is before you, and the means provided or to be provided for accomplishing it are committed to you, in the full confidence that you will use them to the best advantage. The objects which it is desirable to obtain have been indicated, and it is hoped that you will have the requisite force to accomplish them. Of this you must be the judge, when preparations are made and the time for action has arrived."

It may be well for us to enumerate some of the articles that were to be provided. The most important, ten new regiments to be added to the regular army, and placed under his command. Congress was to be asked to sanction this increase as soon after its meeting—the 1st of December—as possible. Next, a siege train was to be formed and forwarded immediately, the guns and carriages to be obtained from convenient arsenals; and, again, there were to be also ample vessels for transportation, including the small boats and lighters for landing the troops and supplies. General Scott, though an ardent Whig, and not politically in sympathy with the Administration, had doubtless chafed a little at being kept in the background during an important war; but now, full of hope that party lines had been passed, and that the President and Secretary were reposing full confidence in him, he set out from the capital, November 24, 1846, to inaugurate the projected campaign.

Digitized by Google

Edward D. Mansfield, LL. D., says: "The only reluctance which Scott felt in accepting the high trust confided in him by the President arose from an unwillingness to interfere in the slightest degree with the command of an old friend and brother-soldier." Surely nothing shows this better than a letter that he wrote *en route* to that brother-soldier, General Taylor: "I left Washington late in the day yesterday, and expect to embark for New Orleans the 30th instant. By the 12th of December I may be in that city, at Point Isabel the 17th, and Carmago, say, the 23d, in order to be within easy corresponding distance from you. It is not probable that I may be able to visit Monterey, and circumstances may prevent your coming to me. I shall much regret not having an early opportunity of felicitating you in person upon your many brilliant achievements; but we may meet somewhere in the territory of Mexico.

"I am not coming, my dear general, to supersede you in the immediate command on the line of operations rendered illustrious by you and your gallant command. My proposed theatre is different. You may imagine it; and I wish very much that it were prudent, at this distance, to tell you all that I expect to attempt or hope to execute. I have been admonished that dispatches have been lost, and I have no special messenger at hand.

"But, my dear general, I shall be obliged to take from you most of the gallant officers and men (regulars and volunteers) whom you have so long and nobly commanded. I am afraid that I shall, by imperious necessity—the approach of yellow fever on the Gulf coast—reduce you, for a time, to stand on the defensive. This will be infinitely painful to you,

Digitized by Google

and for that reason distressing to me; but I rely upon your patriotism to submit to the temporary sacrifice with cheerfulness. No man can better afford to do so. Recent victories place you on the high eminence; and I even flatter myself that any benefit that may result to me personally from the unequal division of troops alluded to will lessen the pain of your consequent inactivity. You will be aware of the recent call for nine regiments of new volunteers, including one of Texas horse. The President may soon ask for many more, and we are not without hope that Congress may add ten or twelve to the regular establishment. These, by the spring—say, April—may by the aid of large bounties, be in the field, should Mexico not earlier propose terms of accommodation; and, long before the spring (March) it is probable you will be again in force to resume offensive operations.

"It was not possible for me to find time to write from Washington, as I much desired. I only received an intimation to hold myself in preparation for Mexico on the 18th instant. Much has been done toward that end, and more remains to be executed."

It is painful to find that the then existing Administration did not deal ingenuously with either Scott or Taylor; for, before projecting this planned campaign *via* Vera Cruz, it had already been secretly determined to urge upon Congress to revive the rank of lieutenant-general, and select some able man, who was politically in full sympathy with the President and his party, to fill the office. By this project it was hoped more surely to reap the fruits of the new victories, and those to be expected under

Digitized by Google

the leadership of General Scott. It seems incredible that President Polk, in his last interview with this noble commander of the army, when sending him forth upon an active campaign to fight the battles of his country, should have withheld from him his intentions to so soon supersede him; and "it is a little worse on that occasion," as Edward D. Mansfield, says, "to have given him the most solemn assurances of his confidence and support."

In corroboration of all these statements is the plain fact that, as soon as Congress assembled, the President's bill was introduced to establish the new rank of lieutenant-general. There is no doubt that what was then deemed party necessity and unity of administration were operating in two ways: first, to supersede both of these indomitable heroes and great soldiers; and, secondly, to so place and use them that whatever might be their successes they could not very well be conjoined; and, further, to so antagonize their interests that a natural rivalry would abate and hold in check the fame of both. It is plain that General Scott in a measure opened the sack and defeated the latter intentions, by his noble letter to General Taylor. However, the *party necessity* went a step further: it led the Administration and the friends of the Administration in Congress to postpone any contemplated additions to the regular army, which were deemed by General Scott so material to success in Mexico, until the very last of the session.

The writer may not claim that the treachery—it is too strong a word—but very properly that the political planning, was altogether defeated by these two wonderful men and brother-officers. The one

Digitized by Google

(Scott) carried forward a long and successful campaign with half the promised force—with far less than that with which he deemed success possible. The other (Taylor) as we shall see, however irritated, however reduced in numbers, rose above all the oppositions and all the adverse environments, to secure a final and glorious victory before sitting down to defend the newly acquired territory left to his care. History plainly shows that it was the Lord's work, and that he could and did strengthen his servants to conquer by the few rather than by the many.

Viewing matters as we can now, nearly fifty years after the events, in the clear light of history, we behold these two campaigns of Taylor and Scott as parts of a unique whole fitting each other. Taylor preceded, cleared Texas and the Rio Grande, swept everything before him to Monterey, and occupied that city, a fortified stronghold. The fewness of his troops in each battle had eventuated in demonstrating the ability of the man, the confident courage of his army, and the glory of his country. On this as a foundation General Scott began to build. He came to the front, he took Taylor's disciplined troops. While Taylor was holding the main Mexican army in check, Scott was not idle; he came up abreast, and, himself with about half the forces promised him, went straight forward to take Vera Cruz and open his new lines of operations. Before long, Scott drew upon himself, as another representative American, the eyes of friend and foe throughout the world. We behold again a splendid exhibition of ability, courage, and the completeness of success. There were, between leaders and officials, misunderstandings, heart-burnings, controversies—at times

Digitized by Google

evidences of the miasmatic influences that hover over low lands and poison those who can not get up to higher levels. But long before the end of the work these two heroes had ascended to the very mountain-tops of fame; and now it is delightful to find so much evidence of brotherly courtesy and kindness between them, and that they were men of such exalted virtue that neither envy, revenge, nor malice could canker their souls.

Just then, when General Scott was beginning his campaigns, General Taylor was destined to suffer most. His best troops must go. He has to take the descent into the valley of bitter disappointments just after the censures thrown out against his capitulation and armistice at Monterey. He must now stand on the defensive against the Mexicans, without sufficient supplies, wagons, guns, or men to render the defensive scheme at all practicable. He might possibly get General Wool and his Chihuahua column into co-operation and conjunction, provided he (Wool) could not get over the mountains to Chihuahua. The way to General Taylor seemed for a time shut up. Disaster, perhaps, or a series of defeats, awaited him, and his countrymen might see him forced to abandon all that frontage from Tampico to Monclova. He might be cut off from Camargo by a small cavalry corps of the enemy, be obliged to go back—like Sherman, after Atlanta had been won—to the Rio Grande, and perhaps to the other side of the river. Where was the force adequate to do what even General Scott thought must be done—viz., stand still, defend and keep Monterey? These were sad reflections, very dark prospects. With his grand troops all gone except a few regular batteries, pray

Digitized by Google

what was left to prevent defeat and disgrace? Why, Zachary Taylor was left! He was there at Monterey, and though he pleaded for the privilege of going with Scott as a subordinate commander, the plea was not granted; and thanks be to the foreseeing Providence that said to him, "Stay thou there at Monterey, gird up thy loins, buckle on thine armor, for there is a gigantic work yet for thee to accomplish." It is good for a great soul at times to suffer affliction, for that soul is sure to emerge therefrom purified and enlarged. The remaining story will justify this old-fashioned statement, that General Zachary Taylor, as he had been throughout the war, was the right man for the time and place.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVII.

CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA.

Preliminary to the battle of Buena Vista—Why Scott was obliged to levy upon General Taylor's army—Worth and Wool's movements—Saltillo—The advance to Agua Nuevo—The falling back to Angostura—Posting of the troops for battle—Visit of Taylor to Saltillo and return—Santa Anna's advance from San Luis Potosi—Santa Anna's letter demanding the surrender of Taylor—Taylor's prompt reply, declining—Santa Anna's dispositions.

WHEN Scott reached the Rio Grande the new year of 1847 was already there. The messages that followed him from Washington, from officials and from friends, were very discouraging, and it soon became evident that he had nothing to rely upon except what force he could draw from General Taylor's field of operations, if he added, perhaps, a few new levies of volunteers and the assistance that the navy would cheerfully furnish.

Santa Anna had already begun to accumulate a considerable army in front of Taylor. At a central point—San Luis Potosi—the strength of the force, as ascertained by Taylor's scouts, was already between twenty and twenty-five thousand men. From this point the wily Santa Anna could march northward with a view of recovering Coahuila; or he could turn eastward to Tampico, or southeast to Vera Cruz; or,

Digitized by Google

should necessity demand it, return for a larger concentration to the capital of Mexico. By the capture and slaying of an important courier (Lieutenant Ritchie) he had become possessed of the new plans of the United States Government, and surely he showed the ability of a general in placing his largest force at this important strategic center (San Luis Potosi). At that time Santa Anna held Vera Cruz with about seven thousand men. Of course, it became a question with General Scott, which he must immediately answer: "What is the wisest thing to do under the circumstances?"

Now, going back to General Taylor at Monterey, let us see what he had been doing while General Scott was *en route* from New York to the Rio Grande. General Twiggs's division, by Taylor's direction, had passed out toward Vittoria on the 13th of December, and General Quitman, the enemy's cavalry retiring, with his famous Louisiana volunteers entered that city on the 29th. A little earlier (December 17th), the Second Infantry and a Tennessee regiment from the Rio Grande had re-enforced Monterey; here General Butler was left in command. General Patterson, with his Illinois brigade, was pushing on *via* Vittoria toward Tampico to fulfill his instructions, heretofore alluded to. On the 4th of January, about the date of Scott's arrival at Matamoros, General Taylor himself, escorted by Twiggs's division and Patterson's brigade, joined General Quitman at the little city of Vittoria, the front, just then, of his field of operations. General Worth, with his proud division, was as yet back at Saltillo.

A sudden rumor that Santa Anna was coming to destroy Worth, Butler, and perhaps Wool, in detail,

Digitized by Google

caused an immediate concentration, by forced marches of Wool's and Butler's troops at Saltillo The rumor was not really true, yet it served, like a *ruse de guerre*, to put Taylor's whole force in position for a forward movement. Such was the situation when, at Matamoros, General Scott issued his celebrated orders assuming command of all the troops in active campaign, and took away from General Taylor the veterans on whom he was relying to meet the thousands that were speedily gathering like a heavy cloud along his front.

General Scott's order reached General Taylor November 14th, while he was yet at Vittoria, and, though General Taylor had been warned by dispatches from Washington that he would be obliged to make large detachments, yet he did not dream of so sweeping an order as that which now came to hand. Neither did General Scott, primarily, design to do this; but as he looked upon the whole field, viewing it, as such men must, like a single field of battle, Vera Cruz, and not San Luis Potosi, became the objective point for the main attack—an attack soon to be made by his forces. This order swept away all the regular artillery and infantry except four batteries, a single artillery company acting as infantry, and two companies of cavalry; and called for the veteran volunteer divisions of Worth, Quitman, and Twiggs, together with the later levies under Patterson. Whatever might have been his feelings, General Taylor was too good a soldier to hesitate an instant in his obedience. The troops were immediately sent. General Worth, with his division, leaving Saltillo in the charge of Wool, made his way rapidly to Camargo and thence down the river to

Digitized by Google

Brazos, seven companies of the Second Dragoons marching directly to the latter place, where Worth joined General Scott in person. The other troops proceeded straight onward to Tampico, whence they were taken in ample time for the exciting operations at Vera Cruz and vicinity.

How keenly General Taylor felt these acts, in view of this dividing and reducing process, may be judged by a brief extract from a private letter written in February, 1847: "I have been stripped by the Government of regular troops, and reduced in volunteers; and, thus stripped and at the mercy of the foe, have been expected by my country to retreat or resign. I shall do neither. I do not care for myself, but feel deeply for the noble soldiers who are about to be sacrificed by their country" (he referred here to his own volunteers, and those of General Wool, which had thus far scarcely been under fire). He says, resolutely: "We shall stand still and give them battle, relying on a just Providence for a right result."

There are no better tests of the manhood of any leader of men than the exhibit he makes of the qualities of his soul in an unexpected emergency. We have seen how resolute was our general in the sudden and unexpected loss of what then seemed the reliable portion of his command. The picture would be incomplete without a corresponding exhibit of the gentleness and affection which he had for those about to depart. He bids them Godspeed in the following words: "It is with deep sensibility that the commanding general finds himself separated from the troops he has so long commanded. To those corps, regular and volunteer, who have shared with

Digitized by Google

him the active services of the field, he feels the attachment due to such associations; while to those who are making their first campaign, he must express his regret that he can not participate with them in its eventful scenes. To all, both officers and men, he extends his heartfelt wishes for their continued success and happiness, confident that their achievements on another theatre will redound to the credit of their country and its arms."

As General Scott had kindly advised him to do, and as a less able, less patriotic, and less bold man than Taylor might have done, the War Department was confident that Taylor would now fall back to Monterey and stand wholly upon the defensive. It was well for the War Department and for General Scott himself that he did not do that. It would have cost Scott more time, more means, and greater losses of soldiers than he suffered, and perhaps the loss of the campaign, had General Taylor shown the least disposition to give up the capital of Coahuila and retreat before Santa Anna's advance troops. General Santa Anna would not have followed him far, for he knew the whole American plan; he knew how Scott was moving upon Vera Cruz; how he had weakened Taylor's "army of occupation"; how Taylor proposed to stay upon the table-land and defend Saltillo; for, as we have seen, Santa Anna had taken the American bearer of dispatches; he had covered all the roads between him and Taylor with his own scouting parties, and thus picked up several American scouts and foragers, and had also effectually obstructed the usual methods of gathering news by Taylor's information-corps. This was so much the case that General Taylor has by some critics

Digitized by Google

been pronounced as lacking in the ability to discover an enemy's plans and doings.

The facts are that, using the two companies of dragoons, some volunteer cavalry, and a battery of artillery, General Taylor had constant, well-timed reconnaissances made. The last such party went beyond, Encarnacion, passing from hacienda to hacienda into the immediate presence of the enemy's cavalry, till some four hundred men, under Lieutenant-Colonel May, had great difficulty in saving his observing out-posts, and in making good a night retreat before General Miñon's squadrons.

As General Taylor had now, all told, only four thousand six hundred and ten men, his own bold forward move from Saltillo through Buena Vista, threading the passes of Angostura, pushing forward as far as Agua Nueva, was itself an essential reconnaissance; for he knew very well, as he had been divided and subdivided for the benefit of the Vera Cruz line, that he must now and henceforth keep his little remaining force together, or nearly so, for he would very soon need—as he did a quarter of a century before when he was a captain at Fort Harrison—every available man. His information obtained was, it is true, meager; yet he did ascertain to a certainty that Santa Anna had nearly five times his own aggregate.

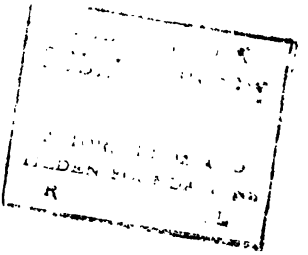
To Taylor and Wool, on the morning of February 21st, Lieutenant-Colonel May brought the news of the rapid advance of the Mexicans. These American generals were then consulting together at Agua Nueva. A short time afterward Major Benjamin McCulloch came in from observing with his Texas Rangers. He reported to them that from a high

Digitized by Google

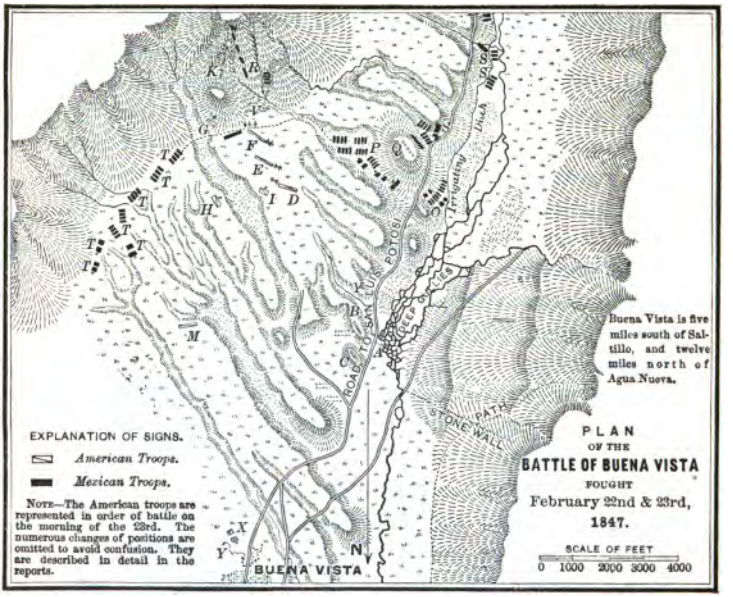
point he had obtained views of a large, showy Mexican force of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, at least twenty thousand strong. Now, mark the promptitude of General Taylor's action. General Wool and several others had noticed and already called General Taylor's attention to that "pass of Thermopylæ," the defile of Angostura. It was some thirteen miles back, just south of the little hamlet (hacienda) of Buena Vista. It was a strong position in itself, which could only have been turned by a long detour to the east. The general, leaving at Agua Nueva a rear-guard of the Arkansas cavalry, Colonel Yell, the Kentucky cavalry, Colonel Marshall, and Steen's regular squadron, all commanded by Marshall, with orders to aid the removal of stores, and to hold on as long as possible, "at once put his other troops in motion for the pass." The Mexican commander was deceived by this quiet work. He hoped to get General Miñon's numerous cavalry in Taylor's rear at this favorable spot (Agua Nueva), come upon him suddenly with all his force, and so gain an easy victory. To this end he was making forced marches from San Luis Potosi, and with insufficient supplies for this rugged mountain region he was pressing recklessly on. But Santa Anna discovered, at midnight of the 21st of February, only a small detachment to be trapped where he had expected an army! and he found even this force under good leadership. It fought actively, as rear-guards should, and fell back disputing the ground, till it struck its coveted aid, the main army at the Angostura defile.

Before entering into the battle of Buena Vista itself let us examine more critically than we have yet done this important defile and its neighborhood.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google



A, Defile held by Washington's Battery and two companies of the First Illinois Volunteers; B, six companies of the First Illinois; C, Third Indiana Regiment; D, Second Kentucky Regiment and Sherman's Battery; E, Second Illinois Regiment and first section of Bragg's Battery; F, Second Indiana Regiment and three pieces of Washington's Battery; G, Kentucky Horse Regiment and one squadron of the Second Dragoons; H, Arkansas Horse Regiment and one squadron of the First Dragoons; K, Rifle companies of Arkansas and Kentucky Cavalry dismounted, Battalion Rifles Indiana Brigade, and detachment from Second Regiment Illinois Volunteers; I, Position of Second Kentucky Regiment, Bragg's Artillery, and detachment of horse, on evening of the 22d and morning of the 23d; M, Mississippi Regiment; O, column of attack, infantry and cavalry against A; P, strong column concentrated to force the American left; Q, battery of eight pieces; R, light troops engaged in the mountains; S, reserve; T, Mexican columns turning the American left; V, Position of Mexican Battery after gaining the left of the American line; X, Cavalry from head of column T attacking Buena Vista; Y, springs.

Digitized by Google

From Saltillo to Buena Vista, following the road southward after you ascend to the table-land, you span a distance of six miles of comparatively level country. Then the appearance is of a cut or break across spurs, which branch out nearly perpendicular to the general trend of the Madre Mountains in that neighborhood; but really, if you pursue the cut, there is a narrow valley which finally leads through the great mountain range.

Though the bottom of the valley is apparently perfectly smooth, with a moderate fall throughout its length, there meanders a dry *arroyo* or deep gully with precipitous banks twenty feet high. Winter floods have so broken through the necks of some of the peninsulas made by the *arroyos* that in places the ravines form a net-work of these gullies impracticable for any troops, for the reason that the troops, who may have with labor crossed one, find another hidden pitfall after a few more yards of flat plain. The only road from the south comes down this valley near the eastern bank of the *arroyo*, and between it and the next rise a series of bluffs cut by deep ravines with somewhat less precipitous sides than the gully, but nearly as difficult by reason of their greater elevation. These ravines in their general course make an angle a little less than a right angle with the road or the axis of the valley—that is, they trend off to the southeast. The plateau which ends on the promontories overlooking the flat was made by some prehistoric flow of lava and scoriæ from the volcanic mountains, and next by the storms of ages has been gullied deeply near its lower end. Some of the ravines reach all the way back to the steep mountains to which the plateau gradually rises.

Digitized by Google

Upon three of the ridges made by the ravines, perhaps six hundred yards across their tops and twelve hundred yards long, and at the head of the ravines separating the ridges, the main battle scenes were enacted. Here one of these ridges, very steep and in a rounded terminus, came nearer the stream-bed than any other—so near that there was at that time just room for the wagon roadway. It served as a cover to the high plateau and cross-ravines behind it. The artillery position under its protection swept the road far southward.

As we have seen, the western spread of the valley, flat beyond the stream-bed, was really impracticable except by a complete transfer of the Mexican army off all roads. This was on account of the network of gullies and cross gullies where the feeding ravines had been for ages cutting deeper into the soil and into the sides of the irregular foothills and mountain-spurs, which to the eyes of the soldiers projected back into the huge mountains that formed the western boundaries of the valley. It is not to be wondered at that fifty or more American officers, as they passed up the valley and came toward these singular landmarks—these natural fortification-lines that make the defile or pass of Angostura—remarked to one another, "What a strong place for defense!"

From Saltillo, by the way of Buena Vista and Angostura, to Agua Nueva is eighteen miles; Encarnacion, the farthest point reached by Taylor's cavalry in reconnoitring, is thirty miles more; and from the hacienda of Buena Vista to Angostura and the plateau of the main battle the distance is about one mile. Having thus with considerable detail located and described the ground and vicinity of the

Digitized by Google

conflict, we are prepared to post General Taylor's little army, which we have seen, according to a preconcerted plan, so suddenly fall back before the coming hosts of Mexicans in battle array.

Arriving at Angostura on the evening of February 21st, General Taylor directed General Wool to encamp the command there, as he afterward writes, "at the new position, a little in front of the hacienda of Buena Vista." He himself, with a small escort, passed on rapidly to Saltillo with the object of putting that town in a state of defense against any possible turning movement of his shrewd adversary. Before his return, on the morning of February 22d, the field had been carefully studied by General Wool and other officers present, and the line selected for a defensive battle. Naturally General Wool first protected the roadway. In it and to the right of it were placed ready for action five field guns of the battery of eight, under Captain J. M. Washington, of the Fourth Regular Artillery. A parapet had been prepared running from the base of this hill at Angostura to the gully, with a narrow passage next to the hill, which was to be filled, in case of attack, by two wagons loaded with stone. Six companies of the First Illinois—Colonel John J. Hardin—occupied a position along the top of the height to the left of the battery and dominating it. They had been ordered to construct a parapet along their entire front. Two companies of the same regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel William Weatherford, occupied the parapet leading to the gully to the right of the battery. The rest of the army bivouacked in the rear of this position the night of the 21st.

The difficulty found by the historian in locat-

Digitized by Google

ing General Taylor's positions is in the fact that there never was near Buena Vista any *absolute* line of battle, and because he and his officers continued to change the place of artillery, cavalry, and infantry from time to time as the designs of Santa Anna were developed and became apparent. We may draw a line from the road at Angostura straight to the extreme left, where Colonels Marshall and Yell fought so bravely; that straight line was crossed and recrossed many times during the battle—troops occupied it supporting batteries or separate guns, some *en echelon* and some thrown forward irregularly. In fact, General Taylor defended a position too large for his small force, and rested his hope for victory more upon the incessant activity of his cannon and their supports than upon any impregnable battle line.

Now, turning to the Mexican side, let us mark a few points of Santa Anna's approach. He had come on from San Luis Potosi in division blocks, much like McClellan with a larger army in later years on the peninsula of Virginia. General Torrejon, cavalry, Third Brigade, eight hundred strong, from Potosi to Bocao. General Juvera, cavalry, Second Brigade, eleven hundred strong, from Potosi to Verrado. General Andrade, cavalry, Fourth Brigade, four hundred strong, from Potosi to Cedral. General Miñon, cavalry, First Brigade, fourteen hundred strong, from Potosi to Encarnacion.

As soon as the cavalry had cleared the front, on the 28th and 29th of January, 1847, General Pacheco started his division (the first), about 4,850 in aggregate, Santa Anna having put in the advance of it some 600 artillerymen, besides trains of supplies, his

Digitized by Google

sapper and miner corps, and that famous conglomeration of worthies, United States deserters, named the "St. Patrick's Company."

On the 30th, General Lombardini led out the Second division, 4,300 in number; and on the 31st General Ortega brought on the rear division, the Third, having about 3,200 men. Allowing 1,200 men detailed to the supply department, 100 for sappers and miners, and 100 for "St. Patrick's Company," and 1,000 each for the brigades of General Ampudia and General Parrodi, which joined from garrisons picked up *en route*, we have an entire Mexican force of 20,050 souls.

Before February 21st Santa Anna had concentrated his main body at Encarnacion, with his advance as far forward as the pass of Carnero.

Early on the morning of the 22d of February, when we may be sure the unyielding courage and devotion of Washington, whose birthday it was, were not for one moment forgotten by the sturdy army of Americans, the brilliant Mexican cavalry, and somewhat later in the day the no less showy infantry with their more clumsy artillery, came into plain view before the higher crests which General Wool was occupying.

General Taylor, early apprised of the near approach of the Mexican army, and already having a small detachment of howitzers and troops, put his depot at Saltillo in a condition of defense, and hastened back to Angostura. Reaching the battle plateau, behold him as he halted, still sitting on his stately horse! His presence, with his firm, confident look, and his reassuring words and voice, more than doubled the reserves of his army.

Digitized by Google

It was a glorious morning. The sun had risen that winter day with unwonted clearness. The hills and mountains, changing their hues from moment to moment as the sun climbed above them and shed its illuminating rays more and more into the darker nooks, touching peak after peak with golden light, seemed like gigantic living forms, veritable Godlike supporters to the little army which had confided itself to their embrace. As the breezes played with their beautiful national flag, they seemed to the hearts of Taylor's men as did the breathings from the everlasting hills to the great king of Israel, and carried everywhere a remarkable inspiration and enthusiasm. Doubtless many souls looked higher than the mountains for help. General Taylor himself certainly did, and found it.

About eleven o'clock, as the general sat there in the morning glow, and with his accustomed eye was running over and over the military positions dotting the rough ground from the little San Juan beside the road, across the plateau, and up to the mountains, a message, which had come to his outer picket under cover of a white flag, was brought to him. He opened and read it. It was from Santa Anna himself, confidently calling him to an absolute surrender at the expiration of one hour.

"CAMP AT ENCANTADA, *February* 22, 1847.

"You are surrounded by twenty thousand men, and can not in any human probability avoid suffering a rout, and being cut to pieces with your troops; but as you deserve consideration and particular esteem, I wish to save you from a catastrophe, and for that purpose give you this notice, in order that

Digitized by Google

you may surrender at discretion, under the assurance that you will be treated with the consideration belonging to the Mexican character; to which end you will be granted an hour's time to make up your mind, to commence from the moment when my flag of truce arrives in your camp.

"With this view I assure you of my particular consideration. God and liberty!

"ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA.

"*To General* Z. TAYLOR,

"*Commanding the forces of the United States.*"

Such was the message. General Taylor's reply, so expressive of his character, dictated from horseback on the spot, was briefer, but sufficiently explicit. It was as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION,

"NEAR BUENA VISTA, *February* 22, 1847.

"SIR: In reply to your note of this date summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request.

"With high respect, I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR,

"*Major-General U. S. Army, Commanding.*

"*Señor Gen. D.* ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA,

"*Commander-in-Chief, La Encantada.*"

It took some time for the escorted messenger of Santa Anna to come from the plain of Encantada to General Wool's outer pickets, and then some time more for the picket officer to ride to General Taylor's place of observation, obtain his reply, and re-

Digitized by Google

turn with it to the waiting Mexican bearer of dispatches, and probably a half hour longer for the latter to rejoin his proud general at the Mexican headquarters. Meanwhile Santa Anna had not been idle.

Many a volunteer sentinel from the north had been all the morning watching the volumes of dust, like white clouds great and small, which indicated the successive approach of brigades, regiments, and batteries. Here and there were observed flags and gleaming armor, till the whole irregular front appeared covered with lines and compact bodies of armed men, well established cannon and brilliant troops of cavalry.

General Santa Anna's dispositions, as gathered from Mexican accounts, were these: Two divisions of infantry under Lombardini and Pacheco—probably side by side—with the (Mexican) left resting against the deep, dry river-bed. This left was strengthened by Colonel Blanco's engineer regiment, placed in direct support of three batteries. These, well manned, could not only sweep the roadway, but reach a part of Taylor's front line. This arrangement made a strong flank for attack or defense.

The other infantry division (Ortega's) was substantially in reserve. The Mexicans had an abundance of cavalry, so that while General Miñon was working his way by a wide circuit through the mountains around to the east of Saltillo, Juvera's combined brigades were kept behind two batteries located pretty well to the (Mexican) right, having the famous regiment of hussars, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel D. Miguel Andrade, to the right front. Those batteries—five eight-pounder guns and five twelve-

Digitized by Google

pounders—were well placed on high ridges, so as to enfilade considerable portions of General Taylor's lines.

Santa Anna not only moved into battle lines in a general way, but, as if preparing for an attack, detached General Ampudia, now in command of a brigade of light batteries with supports, and directed him to drive back Taylor's skirmishers and seize without delay that "other high knoll" held by Taylor's pickets—that one well to his own right—and to hold that ground at all hazards. And this was done, resulting in considerable firing of all arms by those who were near enough to participate in the combat. So, at dark Santa Anna, though losing some officers and men, scored his first success and gained a vantage ground for the morrow. General Taylor, in this preliminary contest for position, had a few wounded but none killed. But, to make the narrative a little fuller, the reader is invited to return to the standpoint of General Taylor when he received the message of Santa Anna and replied to it.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII.

Battle of Buena Vista—The 22d of February—First day's *émeute*—Second day's engagement—Return to Saltillo—The rest at night—The first combat in the morning—The Mexican order and advance—General Wool's efforts—His left driven back—General Taylor's timely arrival—The fearful struggle for the plateau—The batteries; how handled—Lieutenant Kingsbury's story of the Mississippians and their coadjutors—The victory.

SANTA ANNA'S words were bold, and only a single hour given to General Taylor to give his decision; therefore, as soon as the tenor of the general's brief reply became circulated among the officers and men along the lines, there was an eager and universal expectancy of battle. All eyes and ears were strained to catch every varying sight or sound. But weary hours passed by, with little to vary the monotony. There were here and there noticeable some unimportant changes of position made by the Mexicans, and an occasional volunteer shout on Taylor's side, till at last, perhaps two hours before sunset, a single Mexican shell came hissing through the air, struck near the lines upon the plateau, and exploded. This odd commencement of the action was followed by several discharges from Mexican howitzers, which caused no loss.

Though Generals Taylor and Wool found themselves somewhat hampered by Ampudia's position

Digitized by Google

threatening their left, it was too late, after his seizure of the mountain-spur, to remedy it. They said to themselves, doubtless, "We must not try with this little army to stretch over too much space."

About noon on the 22d there was a movement of Mejia's brigade of the Mexican army opposite the American right flank. The Second Kentucky Infantry, Colonel McKee, had been posted as part of the reserve. General Taylor sent it and Bragg's battery, with a detachment of mounted men, to take post on the first foot-hill to the right of the dry *arroyo* in the plain, and somewhat in advance of Washington's battery. The enemy's movement indicated a possible attempt to pass General Taylor's right. This detachment had hardly gone, however, when the enemy's true intention of turning General Taylor's left, and not his right, was suggested by light troops moving toward the mountains on the left.

The Kentucky cavalry regiment, Colonel Humphrey Marshall, the Arkansas mounted regiment, Colonel Archibald Yell, with Lieutenant-Colonel Roane in command of the rifle companies, dismounted, and the four Indiana rifle companies, Major W. A. Gorman commanding, had been sent to stop such a movement. Brigadier-General Joseph Lane, with the Second Indiana Regiment, and a section of Washington's battery under Brevet Captain J. P. J. O'Brien, was ordered to the left of the position proper on the high plateau, with orders to prevent the enemy from passing between the center and the base of the mountain.

Having left his horses with the cavalry which remained mounted, under Colonel Yell, at the base of

Digitized by Google

the mountain, Colonel Marshall formed a skirmish line of riflemen of his own and Colonel Yell's rifle companies and those of the Indiana brigade, under Major Gorman, to hold a mountain-spur and knoll on the flank of Taylor's army, facing another knoll in advance of Santa Anna's right. He had originally sent a battalion of dismounted riflemen to the southernmost spur, but upon receiving word from General Wool that this force might be cut off by the enemy who was marching up the ravine beyond, thinking it to be his general's wish, Marshall withdrew it. General Wool now reached him, and explained that his message was cautionary only, put him in entire charge of the left, and returned to the plain. Gorman was sent to re-occupy the advanced knoll across the ravine, but the enemy had forestalled him and he came back.

At 3.30 P. M. Colonel Marshall began skirmishing with the enemy's infantry on the side of the mountain, and firing continued throughout the rest of the afternoon.

General Taylor, believing that the time for a formal attack that day had passed, rode with his staff to a high point of the plateau, and was surveying with his field-glass the whole stretch of ground then held by his enemy. The sun was just disappearing in the west. Its parting rays lighted up with unusual brilliancy the bright sabers, the gleaming bayonets, the moving and stationary uniforms, and the waving standards, with varying effects. The shadows lengthened and deepened, and the mountains, hills, and spurs, now irregularly brightened with silvery hues near their summits, shot up from the more darkly painted valleys, and

Digitized by Google

gave a scene of exceeding beauty and glory, a spectacle that could hardly be reproduced. At this hour there were everywhere distant music of bands, drum-beatings, bugle-notes, and occasional skirmish-shots to break the stillness, and a hum that busy men and waiting animals always make.

General Taylor, satisfied with observing, was about to turn away and ride back to General Wool near the center of his line, when, of a sudden, the comparative quiet was broken. There was a burst of cannon and musketry resounding and re-resounding among the hills, and clouds of smoke suddenly arising off there to his left. "A fierce attack is coming, after all," he thought. The Mexicans under Ampudia, from their own dominating spur, had opened a rapid, raking fire, but happily ineffective by reason of firing too high upon the dismounted Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry. The Mexicans then began ascending the ridge which connected their knoll with the mountain chain, evidently to get above ravines and to work around the left flank of Colonel Marshall. He kept his men well in hand, gave back volley for volley, and his soldiers clambered up a parallel ridge as fast as the Mexicans, and fired at them their effective rifle-shots. The firing, which caused the loss of a few men on both sides, finally, after producing the impression upon the sky of flashing fire-works, slowly died away. Each commander (Marshall and Ampudia) waited in place, holding to his own recently attained elevated ground. So ended this natal day, the glorious 22d of February, 1847, on the rough, strange field of Buena Vista.

Now, feeling sure that there would be no further action till the morrow, General Taylor, recalling the

Digitized by Google

presence of a large cavalry force reported to be in his rear, took with him a fair escort, consisting of Colonel Davis's Mississippi regiment of infantry and May's squadron of dragoons, and went back to Saltillo. He very properly had a feeling that his battle-ground was not confined to Angostura. That was surely his front position. His entire field included Saltillo, the intervening plateaus, and spurs of the mountains. Hence his evident anxiety about the hacienda of Buena Vista, the rough road to Saltillo, and the depot there. This anxiety caused his second visit. And did he not leave that able veteran, Wool, to execute his orders till his return? The two armies lay down to rest upon the plateaus and slopes where they had been put in position. No fire that night was built for a target to tempt some eager battery-officer to try his guns; and so, except for the watchful guards and keen-sighted pickets, there was for the most of the weary men on both sides an uninterrupted sleep till the morning's dawn. Santa Anna had caused one exception to this rule. His chief of staff, Miguel Torena, under cover of the night, had caused Captain Ballarta's five gun batteries of eight-pounders to be dragged up to a spot sufficiently high toward the mountain to enable him more easily to throw his shot upon Taylor's choice plateau. This was a shrewd preparation for an attempt to be made at daylight to push across the natural barriers and break up his enemy's whole front.

After a few hours' indispensable repose at the city of Saltillo, we find our American general on the road at an early hour. He uses in his report a few pregnant words concerning this visit: "The city" (Saltillo) "was occupied by four excellent companies

Digitized by Google

of Illinois volunteers, under Major Warren of the First Regiment. A field-work which commanded most of the approaches was garrisoned by Captain Webster's company of the First Artillery, and armed with two 24-pounder howitzers, while the train and headquarter camp was guarded by two companies of Mississippi riflemen, under Captain Rogers, and a field-piece [from Bragg's battery] commanded by Captain Shover, Third Artillery.

"Having made these dispositions for the protection of the rear, I proceeded, on the morning of the 23d, to Buena Vista, ordering forward all the other available troops."

While General Taylor, hearing the sounds of cannon in the distance, is pushing on as fast as he can toward the field, we will attempt briefly to record what had already taken place at Angostura. At 2 A. M. on the 23d the Mexicans began their movements, and at dawn firing began on the mountain. The American position was then occupied as follows: The First Illinois, and five guns of Washington's battery, as described, in the center, near the road. Major Mansfield had been sent to take the Second Kentucky and Bragg's battery, if prudent, from the right to the left. On the left, in echelon to the front of the First Illinois's position and nearly a mile from it, the interval protected by three ravines with heads near together, down which one could look from the right of this regiment, was the Second Illinois, Colonel W. H. Bissell, facing south, and watching for the enemy's infantry to come up out of a still longer ravine than those on its right. Captain Enoch Steen's squadron of the First Dragoons stood behind, and secured the interval between the Illinois

Digitized by Google

regiments. This hostile ravine extended all the way to the mountains. On the left of the Second Illinois, a little in advance, and facing more to the southwest, stood the Second Indiana, under Colonel Bowles, and three pieces (one 12-pounder, one 6-pounder, and one 4-pounder Mexican gun) of Washington's battery, under Brevet-Captain O'Brien. Then came an interval, in rear of which stood a part of the Kentucky horse; and still further to the rear, back of a ravine which reached the valley in the American rear, the Arkansas horse. Beyond the interval, leftward, up the side of the mountain, were the rifle companies of the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry and the battalion of riflemen from the Indiana Brigade. Three companies under Major Trail, two of the Second Regiment of the Illinois Volunteers and Captain Conner's company of Texans, soon re-enforced them. In reserve in rear of the Angostura was the Third Indiana Regiment. Sherman's battery so soon came into position with the Second Illinois (Bissell's) Regiment on this morning of the 23d that it was but a short time a reserve. About eight o'clock the Second Kentucky Infantry arrived from across the valley, and was put at the head of the ravines in the interval that still remained between the First and Second Illinois Regiments. Bragg's battery, which had been brought in by Mansfield from the extreme right at daylight, went toward Saltillo on account of a large dust rising in that direction, which might have been caused by Miñon; but when it proved to be from General Taylor and re-enforcements, the battery found a place near Captain Steen's squadron of the First Dragoons.

Digitized by Google

Stimulated by an animated address of Santa Anna—a speech full of denouncements of the wickedness of his foes, and fraught with most patriotic fervor—the Mexicans, though much worn by their long marches, and poorly supplied, nevertheless sprang forward with a reasonable enthusiasm to begin the projected attacks. General Ampudia, as soon as it was light enough to see, with his own brigade re-enforced strongly from the center and the 8-pounders before mentioned, opened the noisy assault. Marshall with his demi-brigade was in waiting. Major Trail, as we saw, with the three companies, had arrived on the mountain-side to help him. General Taylor, in one brief, grim sentence, describes the gallant defense: "Our riflemen . . . maintained their ground handsomely against a greatly superior force, holding themselves under cover, and using their weapons with deadly effect."

This Mexican move in Santa Anna's plan was essential to clear the way. Again, as an intended blind—a sort of *ruse de guerre*—General D. Santiago Blanco, using his three batteries and his fine regiment of engineers, from his place on and near the road and stream-bed moved rapidly forward. He was sustained by enough other troops to make a solid-looking column. Blanco had hardly opened fire, when Captain Washington replied with that quickness and accuracy which distinguished the Northern artillery during that war. With scarcely any casualties on his side, he soon broke and put to flight the hostile column. These Mexicans, in their confusion, ran in all directions seeking shelter against his death-dealing missiles.

Now for a main assault. Behold Ampudia still

Digitized by Google

hammering away on the mountain! It is eight o'clock. At this instant, nearer the middle of the American line, Generals Lombardini and Pacheco, side by side, bring up a strong column of 7,000. Ortega is still kept in reserve back of the interval between Ampudia and Pacheco. General Juvera, with 2,000 cavalry, stands ready to follow up any advantage they may gain. Full of confidence, Santa Anna remains, with his colors flying, on an eminence in the rear, watching the advance, not for one moment relaxing the belief expressed in the last words of his address—"their utter extermination, without pity or quarter."

General Wool was just then at his own right battery, whither Washington's rapid discharges had drawn him. He was undoubtedly in some trepidation, owing to the extent of the ground to hold and the fewness of his troops. How quickly at the signal that attack began! Cannon and musketry on mountain-side from the south; then prompt responses of carbine and musket from the north. A steady advance of the Mexican center columns of attack straight toward O'Brien's little battery, lately run out there in front. Now observe. Cannon-shots from Ballarta's guns were plowing a swath for the Mexicans through the Northern volunteer infantry, and their canister taking effect on the left of O'Brien. On the Mexicans come, firing as they advance. The roaring and the rattle were soon continuous, and the great battle was joined from mountain-side to sloping plateau, from the plateau to the uneven roadway and the impassable river-bed.

There was soon developed a weak point—that which O'Brien with his three field-guns was defend-

Digitized by Google

ing, the left of General Wool's line; for Colonel Marshall, with his command skirmishing on the mountain-side, was virtually detached. The divisions of Lombardini and Pacheco, in some confusion, it is true, but in overwhelming numbers, were pushing nearer. Those behind kept up the impulse when the front men fell or stopped to fire; nearer and nearer they came to O'Brien. The official report says of this *mêlée*: "The Second Indiana and Second Illinois formed this part of our line, the former supporting these pieces of light artillery, Brigadier-General Lane being in the immediate command. In order to bring his men within more effective range, General Lane ordered the artillery forward, intending to follow the movement with the Second Indiana. The artillery advanced within musket-range of a heavy body of Mexican infantry, and was served against it with great effect, but without being able to check its advance." Here took place the first break. At first firing well, the Second Indiana—every observer hated to confess it—did not long face that storm and advance in support of O'Brien. The regiment encountered the terrific hail from the front, also the plunging fire of those Mexican 8-pounders to their left, and, if we may trust to fault-finders among them, they received confusing orders from their own colonel. All this was more than the regiment could bear, and it went to pieces and fled from the field.

Until the forward movement, which was probably not a wise one at that stage of the battle, all General Lane's troops had been kneeling in ranks and pouring in their discharges against the on-coming, determined Mexicans. Now, O'Brien, with his artil-

Digitized by Google

lery, left with no small arms near at hand on right or left to help him, nevertheless redoubled his vigor. All the men and all the horses at one of his guns were killed or disabled, and so at the last minute he limbered up the other two and fled before the storm, but without losing either order or control of his remaining battery-men. Here the Second Illinois Regiment, having Mexicans already beyond either flank, began to retire fighting, till everything on the plateau before the Lombardini and Pacheco column was for a while swept back. Santa Anna was delighted. Marshall's force—that is, the Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry—dismounted, and Major Trail's three companies had done all that men could do. They had skirmished from knoll to knoll against Ampudia; they had strained their lines to face four times their numbers; but who can tell their feelings, to be now absolutely cut off, in the very midst of the turmoil, by the sudden flight of the Second Indiana men, and the swinging back of all others toward the gorge-road, leaving them—Marshall's little forlorn hope—completely severed from the main body? Ampudia unceasingly pressed them in front, and the Mexican cavalry, hugging the mountain, tried to ride them down. So, at last, Marshall, uniting with Yell, who was soon wounded, mounting as many men as he had kept with him, gave back, back, back, swinging off toward the hacienda of Buena Vista. The fugitives of the Second Indiana and Marshall's fragments had preceded them. General Wool was meanwhile doing all he could to reorganize his lines—as did Wright at Winchester before the arrival of Sheridan, as did Wellington before Blücher came at Waterloo; but his hope was growing smaller, when General Taylor

Digitized by Google

arrived. Taylor brought up with him Lieutenant-Colonel May's dragoons. A little farther back followed Colonel Jefferson Davis and his fresh regiment of Mississippi infantry.

Behold this sturdy old soldier, Zachary Taylor, as with his little bevy of staff officers around him he rode forward and ascended to the plateau and halted! He quickly took in the situation. Now, without hurry or confusion, things soon took better shape. Look for a moment at the present lines. Washington, with five guns, had stopped all direct attack in his front, and now had received back O'Brien and his two remaining guns. Of his infantry supports, four companies of the First Illinois had wheeled so as to face the mountain, and had moved in that direction to the plateau. Colonel Bissell had retired his regiment (the Second Illinois) from its first position, and faced it, with the First, more to the left, in an oblique line, supporting Bragg's and Sherman's light batteries. The Second Kentucky had just been hurrying into position across the plateau to the right of the Illinois men, so that we now have a new line making a large angle with the old one.

Davis's Mississippi regiment was soon halted down there nearer the Buena Vista hacienda, then deploying and moving toward the Mexican columns which had passed over the ground where had stood the Second Indiana. Colonel May's regulars now, including Steen's squadron, under Lieutenant Rucker, and Captain Pike's Arkansas squadron, were on the plateau, but were hastening leftward to strengthen Colonel Marshall's retiring command, and so endeavor, with Colonel Davis, to hold the ground between Buena Vista and the great Angostura plateau.

Digitized by Google

Major Monroe, that indomitable, self-reliant actor, is gathering the fragments of companies that had fled from the battle to aid him—if such men will—at the hacienda and the trains. Colonel Bowles, with a sprinkling of brave men from his regiment, joined himself with them to the Mississippians. General Wool, encouraged by the arrival of his chief, and hoping to brace up his shattered left, hurried off to Davis. As Taylor arrived, General Wool said to him, "We are whipped!" Taylor's terse rejoinder bespeaks the man: "That remains for me to determine."

The Third Indiana, under Colonel J. H. Lane, was hastening, accompanied by one cannon conducted by Lieutenant Kilburn, to re-enforce Colonel Davis, who had as quickly as possible formed across a bridge leading from the upper part of the plateau to a point in front of Buena Vista. The enemy's troops were bearing down with a rapid tread. With these changes, the left being turned, we find altogether a new line. The battle to some men would have been already lost; but not so to Taylor. True, his new left, as now posted, was over a mile away at Buena Vista; his center was held only in points, and his men there were few; but those points were on parallel ridges, and the enemy could not, except with extreme peril, pass down the ravines; his right was solid enough at the gorge, but in a defeat it was likely to be cut off and destroyed. Yet there stood the resolute, fearless man. Every soul that was not a coward, beholding him there with them, caught his spirit and prepared for another strong effort.

Behold the Mexicans! They enveloped everything. They were approaching Buena Vista; they

Digitized by Google

were coming down upon Davis and Colonel Lane; even their infantry rolled along the mountain face, over the plateau and the foot-hills, and filled the cross ravines. Taylor's whole new front was covered and masked by them; and, indeed, but for the fearfulness of the approach, it was a handsome, brilliant, superb array. Now the battle is renewed; the cessation, for the breathing-space has been but brief. Now notice Taylor's artillery; Sherman, Bragg, Thomas, Reynolds, and Kilburn, and their rapid, continuous, accurate, terrible fire; grape, canister, and shell, and here and there a solid shot; they hurl them against the Mexican masses; then the infantry are arranged in the places most exposed, and wherever muskets can reach they are used to their fullest extent. The concentrated fire of Sherman's and Bragg's batteries at last broke the Mexican column, which had been toiling along the fearfully rough, stony ground by the foot-hill of the mountain, and, almost sooner than it takes to tell it, the Mexicans in rear of them were turning back. Yes, there was an enormous break in their marching troops, and, strange to say, the plateau was once more cleared of Mexicans, with at least a fourth of Santa Anna's force hopelessly cut off—a worse break for them than that made for Wool by the unfortunate Second Indiana a few hours before. To accomplish this, Lieutenant George H. Thomas had been left with one gun near the old position, and Sherman and Bragg had limbered up and pushed toward the mountain, the Illinois infantry moving in support.

Meanwhile Marshall and Yell had attacked by carbine fire and charged against the head of the

Digitized by Google

Mexicans who were pushing them. In the charge Yell gave his life; while their small command was borne back, friend and foe mingled in a cloud of dust, toward the hacienda. The regular dragoons and Reynolds's section of artillery arrived to succor them. Davis had attacked a part of the column which had turned to face him. The Third Indiana and Kilburn with his field-piece were coming to his aid. After the break had been effected, Bragg, finding himself too near a Mexican battery which had come into action upon the plateau, took advantage of the mobility of his own, and moved off, replenished ammunition, and then hurried toward Buena Vista, where the noise was now the loudest; but that attack over, he turned to his right and fired upon the Mexicans in front of Davis. In fact, this part was kept so busy by Colonel Davis with his Mississippians and other troops, Colonel May with dragoons and artillery, and by Major Monroe with his improvised defenders of the train and town, that they did not at first notice their perilous situation—not until it was next to impossible to get back anywhere through the pass, over the plateau, or by way of the foot-hills. Lieutenant Kingsbury, of the ordnance corps, a staff-officer of General Taylor, and an eye-witness of this scene, which began just before aid reached the brave Mississippians, writes: "Colonel Davis was therefore compelled to receive the attack with a single regiment. . . . It was composed of the men of Monterey, and, unawed by the overwhelming mass which had now reached a critical proximity, it marched unfalteringly forward. When within good range, each rifle sent ahead its messenger of death with certain execution. The

Digitized by Google

sight of broken companies and disordered squadrons which followed seemed to impart new zeal, and, regardless of the odds, the regiment crossed a ravine by which they had been separated from the enemy with a shout of defiance and of triumph, and again the report of their unerring rifles proved the death-knell of many an Aztec warrior." The Mexicans were thrown into disorder, and were compelled to retire to the mountains before a reorganization could be effected.

At this stage, Lieutenant Kingsbury continues:

"While the dispersed cavalry of the Mexicans were rallying, Colonel Davis was joined by the Third Indiana regiment, and one piece of artillery under Lieutenant Kilburn, and a short time subsequently by Captain Sherman with a 12-pound howitzer. The action, being renewed, was maintained with great warmth and obstinacy at this point, the enemy making several efforts to force the line, and being as often repulsed with considerable loss. The confidence of the Mexicans was indeed of short duration.

"In the mean time several bodies of lancers were concentrating somewhat to the rear of the American left, with the apparent design of making a descent upon the hacienda of Buena Vista, in the vicinity of which the provision and baggage trains were deposited. Two pieces of artillery from Sherman's battery had previously been ordered thither, under Lieutenant Reynolds, supported by regular dragoons and a squadron of Arkansas cavalry, under the poet Captain Pike. The scattered forces about the hacienda—the accumulation of fugitives from the different parts of the field—were soon partially organized under the direction of Major Munroe, of

Digitized by Google

the artillery, assisted by Major Morrison, of the volunteer staff, and were posted to defend the position. Before the dragoons and artillery reached the hacienda the columns of lancers, advancing at a gallop, were met near the Saltillo road by the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry under Marshall, who, after discharging their carbines with but little effect, succeeded in dividing the Mexican columns, one portion of which was driven back to its previous position. The advancing squadrons swept past the hacienda, where the fugitive Americans, from a secure retreat, opened a well-directed and effective fire upon them; while Reynolds's artillery followed fast upon their precipitate course with a fierce discharge of shot and shells, drove them across the entire valley, and forced them up a steep ascent, through a gorge in the opposite range of mountains.

"Notwithstanding these repeated repulses, those of the Mexicans who had been driven back from the hacienda were soon joined by another body of cavalry, and, thus re-enforced, again advanced with a view to engage the Indiana and Mississippi troops, which now held a position nearly midway between the base of the mountains and the hacienda. As one regiment was armed with rifles, the formation of a square would have afforded no strength; the two corps [regiments] were therefore posted so as to form a re-entering angle, the opening toward the enemy, and the vertex resting upon the edge of a deep ravine, and thus awaited the attack. For a while on came the enemy with lances in rest, dashing ahead with a haughty confidence and proud contempt for the insignificant numbers opposed to them. But as the distance diminished, their progress gradually be-

Digitized by Google

came slower and slower, until, by a strange fatality, the whole body halted within a hundred yards of the Americans. The movement seemed a mockery, and had they borne charmed lives they could not have exhibited more indifference to human power. But that halt sealed their destiny. Both lines had followed Warren's instructions at Bunker Hill, and 'the whites of the eyes' being now 'fairly visible,' the arms were leveled, and then gleamed forth a sheet of fire that scattered the foe like chaff, felling many a gallant steed to the earth, and sending scores of riders to the sleep that knows no waking."

Again Lieutenant Kingsbury, noticing the Mexican lancers and other Mexican troops cut off and defeated, says:

"At this time the entire Mexican force, which had gained the rear of the Americans, was in a critical position. The infantry held it on the left, while the artillery in front was making fearful carnage at every discharge. It was impossible to advance, and a junction with the main body seemed hopeless." In this emergency a remarkable method was resorted to: "Four officers from a distant point were suddenly observed galloping at full speed toward the American lines. They were met by several officers of the Kentucky and Illinois regiments, which then occupied an advanced position on the plateau, and one of them was conducted by Lieutenant-Colonel Clay to the presence of General Taylor. It then appeared that he bore a verbal interrogatory from Santa Anna, 'to know what General Taylor wanted!'" This absurd message was at once believed to be a mere ruse, but under *the sanctity of a white flag* the American commander was not at liberty to regard it as an act of

Digitized by Google

bad faith, and dispatched General Wool to meet the Mexican general-in-chief, at the same moment transmitting orders to cease firing. Mexican historians state that the ruse of the white flag and pretended message originated with a junior officer who had been cut off, and not with Santa Anna. When General Wool reached the Mexican lines, however, the Mexican battery refusing to cease firing, thereby at once exposing the stratagem resorted to and the deception which had been thus successfully consummated, he declared the parley at an end, and returned without seeing Santa Anna. The cessation of the American fire had enabled the extreme right of the enemy—that is, the fourth part cut off—to complete its retreat along the base of the mountain, and effect a reunion with the main body of the Mexican army.

It will be remembered how General Taylor had garrisoned Saltillo. General Miñon with his Mexican cavalry brigade was often in sight of the garrison during the engagement then taking place near Buena Vista; but Miñon was seemingly waiting for Taylor's final defeat at the front, to render that defeat a disgraceful rout. At noon he drew near the garrison. He intercepted the roads which led to the front, capturing some stragglers from the battle-field. Finally, he came within range of the garrisoned redoubt, when Captain Webster rapidly discharged his two howitzers. Miñon, not wishing his horsemen to face this fire, drew off toward the southeast, as it was not his part to attack a fortified post. Captain Shover, however, from the guard of the train, with his own field-piece took the field, followed by Captain Wheeler with a company of Illinois volunteers, and Lieutenant Donaldson with a howitzer from the re-

Digitized by Google

doubt. They pressed nearer and nearer to the moving Mexicans. Miñon formed once or twice as if to charge but refrained. The guns followed him continuously, firing whenever an opportunity presented. The Mexican column having disappeared in a ravine near the mountains, Captain Shover reports: "Just at this moment, by some accident, the pole of the gun limber was broken. I immediately caused the limber of the caisson to supply its place. The men, with most commendable activity, replaced it with a spare pole from the caisson. While this was being done I galloped to the top of the hill above Arispa's Mills, where a grand sight burst upon my view. The whole column of Miñon was winding its way along the foot of the mountain and through the ravines, more than half the column being within range of my gun. I galloped back to bring it up, placed it in position, and fired rapidly into their crowded ranks, producing considerable confusion and much execution. One squadron faced to the rear by fours, and began to move briskly with the evident intention of charging me, when a shot lodged in their ranks sent them off to the left-about in a gallop. I continued to fire upon them as long as they were in reach, evidently doing them much damage. Owing to the deep ravines over which they passed, I could follow them no farther, but I felt very much gratified that we had been able to drive them from the plain. During the latter part of the firing the howitzer under Lieutenant Donaldson did serious execution, as we could see shells bursting in and near their ranks."

Well on in the afternoon, as a last effort to secure the victory that for a time he thought already won,

Digitized by Google

when the troops which had pushed so far toward Buena Vista were returning, Santa Anna moved forward cannon so as to sweep all approaches to Taylor's new lines re-established on the main plateau of Angostura. He transferred the superb engineer regiment to his own right, uniting them to other reserve troops under Brevet-General Don Francisco Perez; he had reformed in columns of attack all the available men of the divisions of Perez, who had replaced the wounded Lombardini, Ortega, and Pacheco. The main column he caused Perez to form in a deep ravine, and prepare to lead. By five o'clock all was ready. General Perez sent up to the plateau an advance guard, a sort of feeler before a grand charge. Captain O'Brien, who had again obtained two guns from Captain Washington and had gone upon the plateau, and Lieutenant George H. Thomas, ready with another, met and showered this Mexican advance with iron hail, and cleared the plateau as quickly as the scattered hostiles could run to cover. The enterprising Colonel Hardin, commanding for the time five companies of his sturdy regiment, the First Illinois, the Second Illinois, and the Second Kentucky, thought he could gloriously close out the day by pursuing the retreating infantry, and also possibly by capturing those troublesome batteries which Santa Anna had just ordered to fire. The projectiles appeared to come from the mountain-side. Hardin began his advance. He had hardly emerged from the heads of the ravines in which they were lying, and cleared the edge of the plateau, when he encountered, face to face, an overwhelming force of Mexicans already in motion. Perez had begun his strong charge. A looker-on says graphic-

Digitized by Google

ally: "The small band under Hardin was met by a rampart of bayonets, and hurled back as the spray is dashed from the billow." Volley after volley was thrown against these moving masses; bullets filled the spaces. Thomas and O'Brien, who rapidly used their field-guns, kept losing horses and men, till the infantry was driven down a ravine, and O'Brien left two of his guns in the enemy's hands. He had loaded and fired till all his cannoneers were killed or wounded, retreating mostly by the recoil of each piece. He had held on until Captain Bragg, having with weary horses come from the left, again went resolutely into battery within a few yards of Perez's front men, and discharged canister into their faces. General Taylor, with teeth set, stood close by, grimly looking on. His report of this is condensed into a sentence: "The first discharge of canister caused the enemy to hesitate; the second and third drove him back in disorder, and saved the day." Of course, the general means Bragg turned the tide. Yet there were left a few hurtful eddies; for example, some Mexican regiments had swept away the infantry, and were driving them toward the road down one of the ravines in front. As they emerged on the lower plain Torrejon charged. In watchful readiness the gallant Captain Washington opened upon these energetic and hopeful Mexicans. His first shell exploded in the leading squadron, and dispersed it. The remnant of the three infantry regiments retreated to him, covered by his accurate and rapid firing.

Notice again the imperturbable commander. Infantry supports had been almost destroyed. Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Mississippi, Texas, and some Indiana men had fought hard, all this dreadful

Digitized by Google

day. All present were crippled too much to support the batteries. The companies of the regular cavalry—i. e., of the First and Second Dragoons—were but a handful, and Santa Anna still had a multitude of horsemen. Was it not time to give back, and seek safety, now clearly practicable, in flight? The lightning was sharply flashing from cloud to cloud, and the voice of thunder gave a double bass to the cannon discharges up there among the reverberating hills. No, no! Zachary Taylor never thought of surrender or flight. As his ordnance staff officer says: "How his lofty spirit, amid the awful peril of the occasion, bore it all nobly, has already passed into history. . . . It is true there was then neither cavalry nor infantry on which to rely, but there was that which was superior to both! it was the moral power of the presence of the commanding general." Washington, Bragg, Sherman, Thomas, Kilburn, everybody that had a battery, a section, a single gun left, with ammunition to fire under his direct supervision, brought up his quota and showed at that moment how fearless and skillful artillerists could load and fire effective shots. The portions of the solid Mexican columns which had not yet ceased to come up from the hollows and forward and along the terrible plateau, were pierced by the discharges through and through. Leaders lost their lives or their control. At first, gaps in Santa Anna's ranks were speedily filled, and the momentum pressed unwilling men toward the fatal spot. At last, however, after several vain attempts to spring forward and seize the murderous cannon, all the hostile host, as if by a common impulse, began to break right and left and to run for the nearest shelter. The Missis-

Digitized by Google

sippians and Third Indiana, who had already done so much in the ravines toward Buena Vista, had again come forward to resolutely help the artillery and the few shattered infantry by Taylor's side. They then made a clear and final sweep of the plateau. Victory! Victory! The ten mortal hours of battling were over. The storm and the night came in mercy to close out the struggle. Then Taylor laid down right there with his men upon the field he had won, fully prepared—just as General Grant at a later period always was in such an emergency—to renew the conflict at the dawn of the next day. During the ensuing darkness the now beaten Mexicans made a weary, sorrowful retreat. Taylor's was a wonderful victory. His own tired men could at first hardly believe it—a victory won against such great odds, and withal so thoroughly completed.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

Comments made by General Taylor and others, with letters bearing upon the remarkable battle of Buena Vista—Significant statement—Sorrow tempers his rejoicing—Good conduct of the troops — Effectiveness of Taylor's artillery—The enterprise of volunteers—How Colonel Jefferson Davis became forgiven — Letter to General Butler from Agua Nueva — Letter to Henry Clay—Another to Governor Lincoln—Defensive communication to the Secretary of War—Santa Anna's defense of his retreat—Formal orders of congratulation.

In General Taylor's admirable report of Buena Vista he has given some historic facts that we may emphasize by a reference more in detail. "During the night of the 23d of February," says Taylor, "the wounded were removed to Saltillo, and every preparation made to receive the enemy should he again attack our position." Yet, very early in the morning, it was ascertained first by the brave Colonel Marshall that Santa Anna had fled. "The great disparity of numbers, and the exhaustion of our troops, rendered it inexpedient and hazardous to attempt pursuit." The list of casualties in that prolonged struggle attest this simple statement of the case. More than a sixth of the whole of Taylor's force had been dropped out as killed, wounded, and missing; the missing not known to be killed or wounded were extraordinarily few—indeed, as reported, but twenty-three men.

Digitized by Google

The 24th of February was spent in exchanging prisoners, according to agreement with Santa Anna, responding to General Taylor's missive; and there was other sadder work—that of burial. "Our own dead," the General remarks, "were collected and buried; and the Mexican wounded, of which a large number had been left upon the field, were removed to Saltillo, and rendered as comfortable as circumstances would permit."

After this faithful duty, General Taylor slowly pressed his reconnaissances upon the heels of his enemy. The evening of the 26th he found but a small rear-guard of Santa Anna at Agua Nueva, which retired upon the approach of the Northern troops, excepting, of course, "the considerable number of wounded." Agua Nueva was again seized and held. Colonel Belknap, with a reconnoitering detachment, went, March 1st, as far as Encarnacion. Here were found "some two hundred wounded, and about sixty Mexican soldiers." General Taylor further uses this significant, sadly pictorial expression: "The army [Santa Anna's] having passed on in the direction of Matehuela, with greatly reduced numbers, and suffering much from hunger, the dead and dying were strewed upon the road and crowded the buildings of the hacienda." By hacienda is here meant the farms or small hamlets connected therewith. It is from this picture very evident that the victory was bloody and decisive. Santa Anna in his offensive advance had gone beyond his proper supplies of food, and hence hunger as well as the bullets of the Americans had fought against him.

General Taylor's heart has appeared in his comments on this battle. He says with sorrow: "Our

Digitized by Google

loss has been especially severe in officers, twenty-eight having been killed upon the field. We have to lament the death of Captain George Lincoln, assistant adjutant-general, serving on the staff of General Wool, a young officer of high bearing and approved gallantry, who fell early in the action. No loss falls more heavily upon the army in the field than that of Colonels Hardin and McKee and Lieutenant-Colonel Clay. Possessing in a remarkable degree the confidence of their commands, and the last two having enjoyed the advantage of a military education, I looked particularly to them for support in case we met the enemy. I need not say that their zeal in engaging the enemy, and the cool and steadfast courage with which they maintained their positions during the day, fully realized my hopes, and caused me to feel yet more sensibly their untimely loss.

"I perform a grateful duty in bringing to the notice of the Government the general good conduct of the troops. Exposed for successive nights, without fires, to the severity of the weather, they were ever prompt and cheerful in the discharge of every duty, and finally displayed conspicuous steadiness and gallantry in repulsing, at great odds, a disciplined foe. While the brilliant success achieved by their arms releases me from the painful necessity of specifying many cases of bad conduct before the enemy, I feel an increased obligation to mention particular corps and officers, whose skill, coolness, and gallantry in trying situations, and under a continued and heavy fire, seem to merit particular notice.

"To Brigadier-General Wool my obligations are

Digitized by Google

especially due. The high state of discipline and instruction of several of the volunteer regiments was attained under his command, and to his vigilance and arduous service before the action, and his gallantry and activity on the field, a large share of our success may largely be attributed. During most of the engagement he was in immediate command of the troops thrown back on our left flank. I beg leave to recommend him to the honorable notice of the Government."

To entertain a generous, unselfish appreciation of a subordinate who has rank sufficient to be a rival, and give him due credit not only by praising him but specifying the work actually done by him, indicates a quality that all the so-called great generals do not possess. This sort bespeaks magnanimity. This noble quality every letter and report of General Taylor from the fields of active operations unreservedly exhibits.

In reviewing the accounts of Buena Vista—in fact of the entire Mexican War—one must be struck with the wonderful skill, independence, and effectiveness of General Taylor's artillery. With regard to the artillerists in the last engagement, the General reported: "The services of the light artillery, always conspicuous, were more than usually distinguished. Moving rapidly over the roughest ground, it was always in action at the right place and the right time, and its well-directed fire dealt destruction in the masses of the enemy." It seems as though language was not strong enough to enable him to sketch and convey his appreciation. He afterward, in writing, called many by name who had rendered "valuable service" or shown "gallant conduct" in

Digitized by Google

such a way as to be brought to his notice; for example, Major Munroe, Captains Washington, Sherman, Bragg, and O'Brien, Lieutenants Brent, Whiting, Couch, Bryan, Thomas, Reynolds, French, Shover, Kilburn, and Donaldson. These men were then attached to some part of his artillery. Again he mentions Lieutenant-Colonel May, Captain Steen, and Captain Pike, with the regular or volunteer cavalry, and many, many others, from the officers commanding brigades and regiments to those who in humbler capacities did something worthy of mark, and to those who fell or were wounded in the battle. There appears to the reviewer of these reports a grace and a generosity which army and navy commanders may well pattern after in their important public reports.

It will be recalled that Lieutenant (now Colonel) Jefferson Davis, when an officer in his regiment, had not been to General Taylor a very acceptable suitor for the hand of his beloved daughter. But the persevering young man, having inspired her with sentiments akin to his own and in his own favor, had followed up his advantage, till, some years before the war, he succeeded in securing with her an elopement. General Taylor was greatly grieved at his child's conduct, and incensed beyond measure with Davis, so much so that the young people were for a time forbidden his home. Then, to make matters more grievous, the young wife, before the expiration of the first year of her married life, died, and before there had been any expressed forgiveness from her father.

It is said that not until this battle did the strong-hearted old man altogether give over his indignation against his son-in-law. Here, however, Davis's sol-

Digitized by Google

dierly bearing and extraordinary efficiency shown in the engagement broke down every hostile partition that had remained in his mind. Notice how General Taylor mentions the new colonel and his command after Buena Vista! He says: "The Mississippi riflemen, under Colonel Davis, were highly conspicuous for their gallantry and steadiness, and sustained throughout the engagement the reputation of veteran troops. Brought into action against an immensely superior force, they maintained themselves for a long time unsupported and with heavy loss, and held an important part of the field until re-enforced. Colonel Davis, though severely wounded, remained in the saddle until the close of the action. His distinguished coolness and gallantry at the head of his regiment on this day entitle him to the particular notice of the Government." In the light of such a report it is not at all strange that the general who, with such a nature as his, could not long entertain anger, offered the olive-branch. He probably only needed a pretext to extend to Colonel Davis his hand with an entire forgiveness.

An extract from a private letter written from Agua Nueva to General E. G. W. Butler by General Taylor further affords some pertinent facts concerning the battle of Buena Vista that ought not to be omitted. He writes of the onslaught of the Mexicans during the 23d of February in these words: "A portion of the time the conflict was much the severest I have ever witnessed, particularly toward the latter part of the day, when he [Santa Anna] brought up his reserve, and in spite of every effort on our part, after the greatest exertion I have ever witnessed on both sides, drove us, by an immense superiority of

Digitized by Google

numbers, for some distance. He had at least five to one at that point against us. Fortunately, at the most critical moment, two pieces of artillery which I had ordered up to support that part of our line met our exhausted men retreating, when they were brought into battery and opened on the enemy, then within fifty yards in hot pursuit, with canister and grape, which brought him to a halt and soon compelled him to fall back. In this tremendous contest we lost three pieces of artillery, nearly all the men having been killed or crippled, which put it out of our power to bring them off; nor did I deem it advisable to attempt to regain them.

"For several hours the fate of the day was extremely doubtful; so much so that I was urged by some of the most experienced officers to fall back and take a new position.

"This I knew it would never do to attempt with volunteers, and at once declined it. The scene had now become one of the deepest interest. Between the several deep ravines there were portions of level land from one to four hundred yards in extent, which, after our left was turned, became alternately points of attack and defense by both sides. These extended along and near the base of the mountain for about two miles, and the struggle for them may very appropriately be compared to a game of chess. Night put a stop to the contest, and, strange to say, both armies occupied the same positions they did in the morning before the battle commenced. Our artillery did more than wonders.

"We lay on our arms all night, as we had done the two previous ones, without fires, there being no wood to be had, and the mercury below the freezing-

Digitized by Google

point, ready and expectant to renew the contest the next morning; but we found, at daylight, that the enemy had retreated during the night, leaving his killed and many of his wounded for us to bury and take care of, carrying off everything else, and taking up a position at this place [i. e., Agua Nueva]. We did not think it advisable to pursue—not knowing whether he would renew the attack, continue his retreat, or wish to draw us from our strong position—but contented ourselves with watching his movements closely.

"The loss on both sides was very great, as you may suppose—enough so on ours to cover the whole country with mourning, for some of the noblest and purest of the land have fallen. We had two hundred and forty killed, and five hundred wounded. The enemy has suffered in still greater numbers, but as the dead and wounded are scattered all over the country it is difficult to ascertain their number. The prisoners who have fallen into our hands—between two and three hundred, enough to exchange for all that have been taken from us—as well as some medical officers left behind to take care of the wounded, declare that their killed and wounded are not less than fifteen hundred, and perhaps more.

"I hope the greater portion of the good people of the country will be satisfied with what we have done on this occasion. I flatter myself that our compelling a Mexican army of more than twenty thousand men, completely organized, and led by their chief magistrate, to retreat, with less than five hundred regulars and about four thousand volunteers, will meet their approval. I had not a single company of regular infantry; the whole was taken from me."

Digitized by Google

Very soon after making his most important reports and official returns, and after he had published his order of congratulation to his proud little army, he moved his headquarters forward to Agua Nueva. He did much from this point toward putting his department—for it was now a geographical department in fact, if not in name—into a proper defensive attitude. His troops had several skirmishes and minor combats with the enemy's cavalry, which resulted in every instance favorably to his arms. While so engaged he found time to pen some of those admirable letters which have become historic. Like Grant and Sherman in the civil war, Taylor had the faculty of expressing himself with great clearness, and with words that not only show a large mental capacity, but refinement and goodness of heart. The few following witness for themselves:

"HEADQUARTERS, AGUA NUEVA, *March* 1, 1847.

"MY DEAR SIR: You will no doubt have received, before this can reach you, the deeply distressing intelligence of the death of your son in the battle of Buena Vista. It is with no wish of intruding upon the sanctuary of parental sorrow, and with no hope of administering any consolation to your wounded heart, that I have taken the liberty of addressing you these few lines; but I have felt it a duty which I owed to the memory of the distinguished dead to pay a willing tribute to his many excellent qualities, and, while my feelings are still fresh, to express the desolation which his untimely loss, and that of other kindred spirits, has occasioned.

"I had but a casual acquaintance with your son until he became for a time a member of my military

Digitized by Google

family, and I can truly say that no one ever won more rapidly upon my regard, or established a more lasting claim to my respect and esteem. Manly and honorable in every impulse, with no feeling but for the honor of the service and of the country, he gave every assurance that in the hour of need I could lean with confidence upon his support. Nor was I disappointed. Under the guidance of himself and the lamented McKee, gallantly did the sons of Kentucky, in the thickest of the strife, uphold the honor of the State and of the country.

"A grateful people will do justice to the memory of those who fell on that eventful day. But I may be permitted to express the bereavement which I feel in the loss of valued friends. To your son I felt bound by the strongest ties of private regard; and when I miss his familiar face, and those of McKee and Hardin, I can say with truth that I feel no exultation in our success.

"With the expression of my deepest and most heartfelt sympathies for your irreparable loss,

"I remain your friend,

"Z. TAYLOR.

"HON. HENRY CLAY."

"HEADQUARTERS, AGUA NUEVA, *April* 3, 1847.

"SIR: Your letter of the 4th ult., in relation to the remains and effects of your much lamented son, Captain George Lincoln, has safely reached me. I beg leave to offer my heartfelt sympathies with you in the heavy affliction which has befallen you in the death of this accomplished gentleman. In his fall you have been bereaved of a son of whom you might be most justly proud, while the army has lost

Digitized by Google

one of its most gallant soldiers. It is hoped, however, that your deep grief will be assuaged in some degree in the proud reflection that he fell nobly upon the field of battle, while gallantly discharging the duties of his profession.

"I learn, upon inquiry, that the body of your son was carefully removed from the field immediately after his death, and that it was decently interred by itself. Its identity is therefore a matter of certainty. His effects are understood to have been collected with due care, and are now under the direction of General Wool.

"I shall take an early occasion to convey your wishes on this subject to that officer, with the request that he will be kind enough to put the remains and effects, carefully prepared for transportation, *en route* for New York or Boston, by the first safe opportunity, and that he give you, at the same time, due notice thereof.

"I am, sir, with great respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR.

"*Ex-Governor* LINCOLN, *Massachusetts*."

Another letter from the same place, dated March 3d, indicates in a measure something of the hard usage General Taylor was at that time receiving from the Administration at Washington, and also the fearlessness and manliness which the general himself evinced in repelling unjust censure. The letter was addressed to Mr. Marcy, Secretary of War, and reads as follows:

"I have had the honor to receive your communication of January 27th, inclosing a newspaper slip, and

Digitized by Google

expressing the regret of the Department that the letter copied in that slip, and which was addressed by myself to Major-General Gaines, should have been published. Although your letter does not convey the direct censure of the Department and the President, yet, when it is taken in connection with the revival of the paragraph in the Regulations of 1825, touching the publication of private letters concerning operations in the field, I am not permitted to doubt that I have become an object of Executive disapprobation. To any expression of it coming from the authority of the President I am bound by my duty, and by my respect for his high office, patiently to submit; but lest my silence should be construed into a tacit admission of the grounds and conclusions set forth in your communication, I deem it a duty which I owe to myself to submit a few remarks in reply.

"I shall be pardoned for speaking plainly. In the first place, the published letter bears upon its face the most conclusive evidence that it was intended only for private perusal, and not at all for publication. It was published without my knowledge and contrary to my wishes. Surely I need not say that I am not in the habit of writing for the newspapers. The letter was a familiar one, written to an old military friend with whom I have been for many years interchanging opinions on professional subjects. That he should think proper under any circumstances to publish it, could not have been foreseen by me.

"In the absence of proof that the publication was made without my authority or knowledge, I may be permitted to say the quotation in your letter of

Digitized by Google

the 650th paragraph of the superseded Regulations of 1825, in which the terms 'mischievous and disgraceful' are employed to characterize certain letters or reports, conveys, though not openly, a measure of rebuke which, to say the least, is rather harsh, and which I may think not warranted by the premises.

"Again, I have examined the letter in question, and I do not admit that it is obnoxious to the objections urged in your communication. I see nothing in it which, under the same circumstances, I would not write again. To suppose that it will give the enemy valuable information touching our posts or respective line of operations, is to know very little of the Mexican sources of information, or of their extraordinary sagacity and facilities in keeping constantly apprised of our movements. As to my particular views in regard to the general policy to be pursued toward Mexico, I perceive from the public journals that they are shared by many distinguished statesmen; also, in part, by conspicuous officers of the navy, the publication of whose opinions is not, perhaps, obstructed by any regulations of the Department. It is difficult, then, to imagine how the diffusion of mine can render any peculiar aid to the enemy, or specially disincline him to enter into negotiations for peace.

"In conclusion I would say that it has given me great pain to be brought into the position in which I now find myself in regard to the Department of War and the Government. It has not been of my own seeking. To the extent of my abilities and the means placed at my disposal I have sought faithfully to serve the country by carrying out the rules

Digitized by Google

and instructions of the Executive; but it can not be concealed that, since the capture of Monterey, the confidence of the Department, and, I too much fear, of the President, has been gradually withdrawing, and my consideration and usefulness correspondingly diminished. The apparent determination of the Department to place me in an attitude antagonistical to the Government, has an apt illustration in the well-known fable of Æsop.

"I ask no favor and I shrink from no responsibility while intrusted with the command in this quarter. I shall continue to devote all my energies to the public good, looking for my reward to the consciousness of pure motives and to the final verdict of impartial history."

While General Taylor occupied his humble tent at Agua Nueva and conducted his compassionate and able correspondence, Santa Anna was gradually drawing back his forces into the interior of Mexico. The latter had almost ignored his own wounded, but finally he declared that, "as I had not means for their conveyance, the enemy [General Taylor] might take them to Saltillo, under the protection of the laws of nations." He could not conceive where Taylor had obtained any prisoners, "unless it were some of our dispersed troops, or some who, from the fatigue of the two previous days, had remained asleep when we moved"; still, he at last condescended to make the proposed exchange, and he furthermore graciously allowed the bandage to be removed from the eyes of the officer bearing the white flag—an honor indeed only rendered to him personally—permitting him to behold the abundance of his troops and the sickness of his camp. Santa Anna's reasons for his

Digitized by Google

retreat were ample—not beeves enough to last a week, horses without forage, the wounded that were still with him suffering for everything needful, the rigor of the climate in that early spring, "the entire want of bread," and the alkaline water, increasing sickness, more than half of his army laid by from its ravages. We do not wonder that he wrote such graphic sentences as these:

"I knew that a retrograde movement to our former position had become inevitable; but though everything around me proclaimed this necessity, my feelings revolted against it, solely because I foresaw that, from ignorance, malice, or presumption, the countermarch would be condemned, and that those who did not witness our situation would imagine the possibility of the army's continuing its operations. . . . A mere determined number of men will not, as many imagine, suffice for the prosecution of war; it is indispensable that they be armed, equipped, disciplined, and habilitated, and that a systematized support for such an organized force be provided. We must bear in mind that we have to combat in a region deficient of all resources, and that everything for subsistence has to be carried along with the soldiery. The good will of a few will not suffice, but the co-operation of all is needed."

The foregoing pregnant discourse is a clear demonstration also of the exceeding hardness of General Taylor's tasks; but, as we have clearly seen in offensive and defensive operations, in campaign and battle, in a country that from barrenness itself fought against him, he overcame all opposition. He was subjected to an extraordinary depletion, his best troops taken from him, and himself rewarded with

Digitized by Google

fault-finding from executive officials; and yet, calmly trusting in himself and his little band, under a Providence most unreservedly believed in, he went on, like Joshua of old, to a splendid victory—a marvelous success. We can not better close this chapter of Taylor's doings and sayings than by giving his beautiful congratulatory address to his victorious little army:

"1. The commanding general has the grateful task of congratulating the troops upon the brilliant success which attended their arms in the conflicts of the 22d and the 23d [February, 1847]. Confident in the immense superiority of numbers, and stimulated by the presence of the distinguished leader, the Mexican troops were yet repulsed in efforts to force our lines, and finally withdrew with immense loss from the field.

"2. The general would express his obligations to the officers and men engaged for the cordial support which they rendered throughout the action. It will be his highest pride to bring to the notice of the Government the conspicuous gallantry of different officers and corps, whose unwavering steadiness more than once saved the fortunes of the day. He would also express his high satisfaction with the conduct of the small command left to hold Saltillo. Though not so seriously engaged as their comrades, their services were very important, and were efficiently rendered. While bestowing this just tribute to the good conduct of the troops, the general deeply regrets to say that there were not a few exceptions. He trusts that those who fled ingloriously to Buena Vista, and even to Saltillo, will seek an opportunity to retrieve their reputation, and to emulate the

Digitized by Google

bravery of their comrades who bore the brunt of the battle, and sustained against fearful odds the honor of our flag.

"The exultation of success is checked by the heavy sacrifices of life which it has cost, embracing many officers of high rank and rare merit. While the sympathies of a grateful country will be given to the bereaved friends and families of those who nobly fell, their illustrious example will remain for the benefit and admiration of the army."

NOTE.—Taking with me Lieutenant Guy Howard and Mr. L. M. Johnson, the railroad manager of the Mexican International road, I left Monterey at 3.30 A.M., Thursday, March 10, 1892, for Saltillo. The connecting railroad is of the narrow gauge; the ascent is gradual but continuous over the entire route, about sixty-eight miles. By seven o'clock we were breakfasting at the principal hotel (Esterban) of that beautiful city. Immediately after breakfast we paid our respects to the Governor of the State, General Garza Galan, at his palace. He had his own interpreter, Señor Mesquez. Having explained the object of my visit, the courteous Governor, regretting that he could not go himself, gave us, for escort to the battle-field of Buena Vista, the interpreter, the mayor of the city, Jesus LoValde, also a friend of the mayor. Two good carriages were furnished for the party, and a Mexican guide, whose name is Sanchez, the son of General Sanchez. This guide was a young soldier in Santa Anna's cavalry at the time of the great battle. Through the excellent interpreter this now aged Mexican soldier went over the ridges and plateaus and through the ravines to point out to us the position the troops had occupied from Angostura, obliquely forward to the mountain ranges. He was very clear in his recollections of the events of Buena Vista, particularly of the ground occupied by General Santa Anna's army. By a spring of water near an old cotton-wood tree was the place our friends selected to cook a "kid" and to spread the choice lunch which the Governor had ordered for our benefit. My personal survey and that of those with me, under such guidance, gave me an altogether new conception of the situation of the pass, of the ridges and ravines, of the mountains, and of the little

Digitized by Google

hacienda of Buena Vista to the rear. I was particularly struck with the exceeding roughness of the region, the steepness of the ridges, and the inevitable loose stones which rendered it so exceedingly difficult to ascend over them with cavalry and artillery horses. The altitude of the pass renders it cool at any time. On returning the six miles to Saltillo, the work of General Taylor's detachments and the different points where the struggle was the fiercest became very apparent. The Governor himself, later in the day, went with me to the height fortified and occupied by General Taylor's guard and reserve left at Saltillo. An immense spring of water is close by the steep hill, now crowned by a redoubt, which was renewed in 1865 during the Maximilian campaign. In fact, the other twin hill south of Saltillo is now fortified. I can not help feeling, even after forty-five years, how plain are the evidences not only of the boldness of General Taylor's operations, but of his thoroughness and carefulness in his preparations for battle. And, taking into the account my knowledge of the superiority of Taylor's artillery, and of the singular disabilities under which General Santa Anna labored from the condition of his command, to which he had but recently come, with the hardness of the country over which he marched, my respect for the energy and ability of Santa Anna himself was increased rather than diminished. Had not a good Providence raised up for us that indomitable hero, Zachary Taylor, to meet him at the pass of Angostura, surely he would have succeeded in his enterprise, even unfavorable as the situation necessarily was for him. THE AUTHOR.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XX.

A messenger sent to Washington—Escort attacked—Mexican General Urrea took the field, and filled the military department with troublesome detachments—General Taylor defeated him, and cleared his whole front—Headquarters again at Monterey—Walnut Springs—Comparative quiet—Perplexing letters from all parts—How answered—The candidacy for the presidency of the United States kept before General Taylor's mind in spite of efforts to mind only his military work.

GENERAL TAYLOR sent to Washington his report of Buena Vista by the hands of Mr. Thomas L. Crittenden, of whom he said in the report, "though not in service, he volunteered as my aide-de-camp on this occasion, and served with credit in that capacity." Some one hundred and fifty wagons and this honorable messenger were directed toward Camargo. They had a good escort of about three hundred men, including a section of artillery. More than five times this escort, under the Mexican cavalry general Urrea, ran upon the detachment at Seralvo and gave them a hard battle. The Mexican cavalry was badly beaten, and the escort went on to the Rio Grande without further interruption. General Taylor was rejoicing that he had provided a sufficient escort, when he heard that Urrea had been re-enforced, and was aiming to cause more trouble to trains and small parties going to and from within his lines. The old

Digitized by Google

general took the field at once, using May's dragoons, Bragg's battery, and two regiments of volunteers. He speedily cleared the boundaries of the small detachments, driving the last remnants through the little town of Cadereyta and across the Sierra Madre range. Then he quietly and leisurely marched back to Monterey, and took up his headquarters at Walnut Springs, north of the city, where they had been before and during the battles in that neighborhood.

Here, after sending out trusty commanders and occupying the necessary posts and outposts for a defensive attitude, he rested for many days. Soon his volunteer troops were further diminished by the expiration of service, and the general was not in condition again to take up offensive movements. In fact, the interest of military men was already directed to other fields, being transferred to Scott's now most important line of operations *via* Vera Cruz and the interior of Mexico.

After the hard labor of the last six weeks, General Taylor experienced a feeling of comfort when he walked out from his little tent, on April 28th, and took a good resurvey of that high plateau, already as familiar as the home of his youth—the springs, the small rivulet running therefrom with its clear and abundant water, the now delicious climate, the picturesque views of the hills and mountains, and the charming little city projected into the grand background, with its castles, its mills, its tannery, its citadel, and its checkered streets. What a different feeling warms the commander's heart as he now gazes upon all this, from that on the eve of battle the morning of his first arrival, when he stood in the

Digitized by Google

same place with his staff officers near at hand and tried to take in only the military features of the situation! Then came the rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon; now it is the hum of happy voices, with a beautiful and quiet landscape. "If my wife and family were only here, it would not be a bad place to dwell in," he said to himself.

Some one of his friends who could sketch fairly well has given a drawing and description of General Taylor's headquarters at this place. In the right-hand front corner of the picture appears about a third of his common wall tent; in the other front corner is the trunk of a large tree, probably a walnut, with enough bushy branches included to show the grandeur and indicate the sweetness of its shades when the hot days come. And then, away back, there are other trees and shrubs for a finish to the sketch, while among them, and near at hand, are the fillings-out of the simple headquarters. "Here are barrels, tubs made of old barrels, pails, tin dishes, and the good old coffee-pot, arranged before you, with not a few stumps of old trees. An odd place, I assure you, is this same kitchen [the rearmost contrivance]. It [the kitchen] is all outdoors, for there is nothing but a rude roof made of slabs, with a few large rocks piled up beneath it on one side, against which the fire is made to keep it from being utterly blown away. Don't forget the harness of General Taylor's traveling-wagon, upon one of the corners of the mess-tent, part of which you see on the right, with the interpreter's [small] tent between it and the general's."

The soldier postman having brought him a bundle of letters, official and unofficial, he went into that

Digitized by Google

small tent and pulled a camp-stool to the side of his improvised table, and then broke the seals first of the official envelopes, and these being disposed of he examined the others. They were letters from different cities of the United States, from places far asunder; some from stricken parents, whose sons had fallen near him in battle; but the most from prominent citizens who were part and parcel of some prominent political organization, and who now were striving to be earliest in the political field with the brave general as their leader.

On this day, April 28, 1847, after a few minutes of quiet meditation, he caught up his pen and wrote one reply. His adjutant was then called and requested to make and preserve a copy. This short letter is important, and is the key-note to hundreds of others that multitudes of enthusiastic friends caused to be written during the ensuing year. As this copy indicates the nature of one epistle which General Taylor that day received, we will here insert it in full:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION,
"CAMP NEAR MONTEREY, MEXICO, *April* 28, 1847.

"SIR: Your letter under date of the 16th of March has been duly received. To the inquiry as to whether I am disposed to accept the nomination of President of the United States if tendered to me from the Native American Convention, I would most respectfully reply, and with full appreciation of the kind feeling which dictated the mention of my name in connection with the dignity and honor of so high an office, that, even if an aspirant for the presidential office (which is not the case), I could not, while the

Digitized by Google

country is involved in war, and while my duty calls me to take part in the operations against the enemy, acknowledge any ambition beyond that of bestowing all my best exertions toward obtaining an adjustment of our difficulties with Mexico.

"I have the honor to remain, dear sir, your most obedient servant,

"Z. TAYLOR, *Major-General U. S. A.*"

General Taylor was what was called, during the political campaign to which the foregoing communication refers, a "Henry Clay Whig." Though not a partisan, he had nevertheless, upon all subjects which he had examined, the most decided convictions. There had been nothing connected with the Mexican War to change his political faith.

From April to October editors of newspapers, secretaries of clubs and conventions, well-known party leaders, governors of States, and members of Congress endeavored to draw him out and commit him to sundry pledges and indorsements of distinctive party measures. During that period he dwelt in the same small tent and lived his simple, unpretentious soldier-life, and answered his correspondents with admirable dignity and reserve. Over and over again he wrote such phrases and sentiments as these: "I have no wish for the presidency"; "I can not consent to be exclusively a party candidate"; "I greatly doubt my qualifications for the office"; "If the good people think proper to elevate me at the proper time to the highest office in their gift, I will serve them from a principle of duty"; "If I ever occupy the White House, it must be by the spontaneous movement of the people." He deprecated

Digitized by Google

and denounced self-seeking, and preliminary pledges except to cling to the Constitution. He must be untrammeled, that, if President at all, he might be President of the country and not of a party.

The extent of the general's spirit of self-abnegation may be inferred by the following. From the same place, June 9, 1847, in reply to a letter from a Louisiana friend, he wrote: "As regards being a candidate for the presidency at the coming election, I have no aspirations in that way, and regret that the subject has been agitated at this early day, and that it had not been deferred till the close of the war. . . . Very many changes may take place between now and 1848, so much so as to make it desirable for the interests of the country that some other individual than myself, better qualified for the situation, should be selected; and could he be elected, I would not only acquiesce in such an arrangement, but would rejoice that the republic had one citizen—and no doubt there are thousands of them—more deserving than I am, and better qualified to discharge the duties of the office."

The historian may follow General Taylor by the several successively published letters back to the Rio Grande. On November 25th, from Brazos Island, Texas, he gave to the Hon. Andrew Stewart, of Pennsylvania, who wrote him and conveyed the proceedings of a Whig meeting held at Waynesburg, of that State, in his behalf, a brief, graceful, and fitting reply. Herein he expresses "pride and pleasure" for the good tidings conveyed, but reiterates his unalterable resolution to take no partisan stand.

Next we find that he has joined his family at

Digitized by Google

Baton Rouge. His public communications are, from and after December 30, 1847, from his humble cottage near the fort. They are probably longer, being more elaborate and more systematic in statement than any that came from the field.

Early in 1848 a public meeting was held in Baltimore, Md., Mr. Mayer, the secretary of the meeting, sent to General Taylor a copy of the preamble and resolutions passed by the assembly. The first, it is probable, did not reach its destination, so that a duplicate was forwarded to Baton Rouge. In his rejoinder the general shows that his Baltimore friends had reached his heart: "The political sentiments adopted at that meeting, I rejoice to say, meet with my cordial approval and assent. No movements in any part of the country having the object to offer testimonials of honor and respect toward myself, or to advocate my election to the presidency, have caused me more lively pleasure or demand more of my gratitude."

They had put this heroic character, this modest, manly man, in nomination, with the distinct averment that he should make no promises of reward for party services; that he should be bound by no paper restrictions except the law of the land; and that it should be universally understood that he belonged to the whole people. Unconsciously, however, he gave the strongest assurance when he said he was a "moderate Clay Whig"; that he preferred Henry Clay, who was an accomplished statesman, at all times, even up to the time of the National Convention, to himself. Of course this drew taut enough the slavery line; this made the principle of protection more popular and secure; this fixed forever the

Digitized by Google

right of the General Government to consider and make "internal improvements." It gave all patriotic Whigs great vantage-ground.

General Taylor at first, after his return to Baton Rouge, could with difficulty realize or conform to the new order of things. He had little privacy, for men, women, and children came from near and from far to do homage to the hero who had gained so many victories, and who had already been so long before the public in a great war that his name and deeds had become familiar in every intelligent household throughout the country; and the almost universal agitation of the question of his candidacy for the presidency of the republic increased tenfold the desire of the people to see him, and, hardly less, the members of his family. The Mississippi steamers, loaded with passengers, were constantly passing by his cottage up and down the great river, so that few indeed were the days when visitors were not thronging the porches and seeking a look at his sturdy face and a shake of his hand, and with their keen, curious eyes taking in the surroundings.

Mrs. Taylor for a brief time seemed to have secured her heart's desire, when her husband at last, after those almost interminable battles, had actually returned and joined herself and daughter in their pretty, humble home. But she frankly told him to keep out of political life. She would not even agree to his willingness to submit himself to the will of the people regardless of party lines. Oh, no; she thought it was some dark conspiracy to carry them into new and untried ways of thinking and living, for which they had not been fitted by education or previous habits. Like other unambitious army women, she

Digitized by Google

had been looking forward to a happy period of rest for herself and husband after those years of almost unending change, exposure, and privation to which she had been subjected ever since she came to him as a bride. Here, now, not far away, was the plantation that filled his leisure, and gave to him and to her work enough with agreeable entertainment. Here was the charming little cottage, with their beautiful daughter, Mrs. Bliss, at hand to give them enough of youth and freshness. Here was the little chapel, with its welcome service. Around them and near them was the society that they understood and preferred. She did not welcome either the excitement of the political campaign, or the brilliant prospects at Washington which were to come after the election. But she yielded to her good husband's decision; for was he not already committed when he penned his first letter from Agua Nueva? The will of the people, under God, as soon as it should be expressed by the ballot, was a law to this veteran patriot. His country's interest and honor had long been dearer to him than life. At any rate, his noble wife finally gave up her own wishes, and with no substantial show of opposition carried out his plans; but the unusual scene presented itself to every visitor, and particularly to every ardent partisan who came for favors, of a household without political enthusiasm or seeming ambition. It appeared as if, instead of approaching the fulfillment of grand hopes and joys without limit, they were venturing into a shadowy and untried land, where trials and duties were more potent than any anticipated personal advantage.

Even General Taylor's mind, so reflective and even-tempered, seems to have been touched by his

Digitized by Google

good wife's forebodings. These women-instincts are all marvelous! They often feel for their beloved what they can not put into words. But duty called, and the members of this family, while prepared for any future, schooled themselves to obey the successive signals.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXI.

POLITICAL OPINIONS.

Five national parties in the field—The Oregon Question irritates—Tariff—Internal improvements—Slavery—Mr. Clay's compromises—Taylor and his three hundred slaves—Taylor a Whig, but never a partisan—Defines his principles in the Allison letter—Daniel Webster's feeling—Democratic Baltimore Convention of 1848—Whig Philadelphia Convention—Taylor nominated by a large majority.

THERE seemed to be such a universal call, judging only by the letters and extracts from the public journals which General Taylor received, that for a time he felt that, if he were a candidate for the office of President, he might have what he had coveted —that is to say, men of all parties supporting him. But practically, at the close of the Mexican War, there were at least five parties in the field, all striving for national recognition.

First, the Democratic party, which, strange to say, had greatly lost its popularity during its successful contest with Mexico; second, the Whig party, in which the two great orators and statesmen, Clay and Webster, were the acknowledged leaders; third, the Free-Soil party, just then headed by an ex-President, Martin Van Buren—a party which was mainly drawn from both of the old organizations, and which planted itself simply upon the ground

Digitized by Google

that all acquired territory should be forever free; fourth, the Liberty party, which was indeed the out-and-out Abolition party, advocating the immediate freeing of the slaves without regard to other consequences; and, fifth, what was known as "the American party," holding tenaciously to the idea that native Americans should bear rule in the United States. So that in the political field there were just then a multitude of combatants and great turmoil, and, as the names of the parties indicate, many active and disturbing issues under discussion.

The Oregon Question, as it was termed, which had been decided against the claimants, who were in favor of a more northern boundary from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast being actually established along the parallel of latitude 54° 40′, was not yet out of mind. It had been defeated principally through the leadership of Mr. Calhoun, of South Carolina, and his ardent followers. The question in the books was settled, but the shadow of its irritations still remained. Men of all parties, on account of the surrender of territory, were crying out against the Administration and the Calhoun partisans. "You," they cried, "back down before a great power like Britain, and accept the forty-ninth parallel for our boundary, while you push the weak Republic of Mexico to extremes, and seize upon her domain!"

The questions, also, of a protective tariff and of public improvements at the nation's expense, strongly advocated by Mr. Clay, were then living issues. The settlement of the boundary between Mexico and the United States—in fact, the securement of peace for which Mr. Polk, through a special message and consequent bill, had asked of Congress the appro-

Digitized by Google

priation of two million dollars to be placed exclusively at his disposal—had not yet been fully effected. Out of that had come the celebrated Wilmot Proviso — the money to be given, *provided* slavery should never enter the acquired domain. The dangers to our Union growing out of the controversies between the North and the South seemed then so imminent, that our ablest public men, in Congress and out, were everywhere propounding tentative measures which to them seemed necessary for its preservation.

Mr. Clay's compromise clauses and amendments, that were so long under discussion, and were not finally disposed of until after the death of General Taylor, were published in all the dailies and weeklies, and everywhere agitated the people. They were, in substance: To place a line of demarkation, like that secured through the Wilmot Proviso, against the extension of human slavery. This item was tendered to all Free-Soilers, and, in fact, to all who were opposed to slavery, secretly or openly. He also proposed the passage of a stronger United States law to render more effectual the returning to bondage of every slave who should escape to the free States or Territories. This item was the tender of a *douceur* to all men of every stripe who held to the righteousness of the slave system and were striving for its perpetuity.

Great care had long been exercised to keep what was called the balance of power between slavery and freedom; there should always be just as many slave States as free States. This division was secured and long maintained. If, then, a free State came into the Union, a slave State must enter at the same time.

Digitized by Google

Now that our Western Territories were being very rapidly settled, from various causes which we need not pause to enumerate, at every session of Congress new States were carved out of the Territories, and they were knocking at the door of Congress for admission into the family of States. The immense territory which we had just acquired at the end and in consequence of the Mexican War, intensified in activity these civil and political agitations and operations.

As we plainly see, in looking back over the discussions of those days, the political seas of our fathers were unusually stirred up. There were currents and counter-currents; there were gales and strong waves which seemed to carry everything before them. The disturbing influence in all those tumultuous waters was the slave question; so that it was simply impossible for General Taylor, or any other man, to have smooth sailing. Therefore, however wise he might be, if he accepted a candidacy, it was simply impossible for him to save himself from the turnings, boiling, and eddies of the currents, or from the buffeting of the storms.

With these few words, simply suggestive, upon the then existing political conditions of the country, we can not do better than notice how General Taylor met the crisis. One letter, for example, was written him by a friend in Mississippi, stating that he (the friend) had a large number of slaves, and before voting he desired to know General Taylor's views with reference to the slave question at issue, so as to determine whether or not his slave property would be enhanced or diminished in value by his election.

Digitized by Google

The general, remarkably like a veritable politician, very quietly replied that he himself had three hundred slaves, and he thought it was not necessary for him to make any other answer in reference to the political issues in question. But, being very hotly pursued, the old general at last, on April 22, 1848, wrote a letter to Mr. J. S. Allison, of Pennsylvania, in which he set forth distinctly his views upon some of the questions in controversy—more so than he had done before; and very probably that letter gained him many votes from moderate men of all parties, but lost him also many more from those who distrusted his sentiments in all things which pertained to the slavery question, more especially because he himself lived in Louisiana, was a Southern man, and an acknowledged owner of slaves. Here is the Allison letter:

"My opinions have so often been misconceived and misrepresented, that I deem it due to myself, if not to my friends, to make a brief exposition of them upon the topics to which you have called my attention.

"I consented to the use of my name as a candidate for the presidency. I have frankly avowed my own distrust of my fitness for this high station; but having, at the solicitation of many of my countrymen, taken my position as a candidate, I do not feel at liberty to surrender that position until my friends manifest a wish that I should retire from it. I will then most gladly do so. I have no private purpose to accomplish, no party projects to build up, no enemies to punish—nothing to serve but my country.

"I have been very often addressed by letter, and

Digitized by Google

my opinions have been asked upon almost every question that might occur to the writers as affecting the interests of their country or their party. I have not always responded to these inquiries, for various reasons.

"I confess, while I have great cardinal principles which will regulate my political life, I am not sufficiently familiar with all the minute details of political legislation to give solemn pledges to exert myself to carry out this or to defeat that measure. I have no concealment. I hold no opinion which I would not readily proclaim to my assembled countrymen; but crude impressions upon matters of policy, which might be right to-day and wrong to-morrow, are perhaps not the best tests for fitness for office. One who can not be trusted without pledges, can not be confided in merely on account of them.

"I will proceed, however, now to respond to your inquiries:

"First, I reiterate what I have so often said—I am a Whig. If elected, I would not be the mere President of a party. I would endeavor to act independent of all party domination. I should feel bound to administer the Government untrammeled by party schemes.

"Second, the veto power. The power given by the Constitution to the Executive to interpose his veto is a high, conservative power, but, in my opinion, should never be exercised except in cases of clear violation of the Constitution, or manifest haste and want of consideration by Congress. Indeed, I have thought for many years past that the known opinions and wishes of the Executive have exercised undue and injurious influence upon the legislative de-

Digitized by Google

partment of the Government; and for this cause I have thought our system was in danger of undergoing a great change from its true theory. *The personal opinions of the individual who may happen to occupy the Executive chair ought not to control the action of Congress upon questions of domestic policy; nor ought his objections to be interposed where questions of constitutional power have been settled by the various departments of the Government and been acquiesced in by the people.*

"Third, upon the subject of the tariff, the curency, the improvement of our great highways, rivers, lakes, and harbors, the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected and carried out by the Executive.

"Fourth, the Mexican War. I sincerely rejoice at the prospect of peace. My life has been devoted to arms, yet I look upon war at all times, and under all circumstances, as a national calamity, to be avoided if compatible with the national honor. The *principles* of our Government, as well as its true *policy*, are opposed to the subjugation of other nations and the dismemberment of other countries by *conquests*. In the language of the great Washington, 'Why should we quit our own to stand on foreign ground?' In the Mexican War our national honor has been vindicated; and in dictating terms of peace we may well afford to be forbearing and even magnanimous, to a fallen foe.

"These are my opinions upon the subjects referred to by you, and any reports or publications, written or verbal, from any source, differing in any essential particular from what is here written, are unauthorized and untrue.

Digitized by Google

"I do not know that I shall again write upon the subject of national politics. I shall engage in no schemes, no combinations, no intrigues. If the American people have not confidence in me, they ought not to give me their suffrages. If they do not, you know me well enough to believe me when I declare I shall be content. I am too old a soldier to murmur against such high authority."

The foregoing letter, while it is characteristic, showing the modesty, the patriotism, the unselfishness, almost the self-distrust of a grand soul, nevertheless is an indication of positiveness which was not to be gainsaid.

Taylor had long contemplated his country as a whole, and Henry Clay was his *ideal* of a statesman. He had naturally imbibed Mr. Clay's sentiments and spirit, and would at one time have greatly preferred to see Mr. Clay in the presidential chair to any other man, not excepting himself. Yet, once having given his word, that was enough for Zachary Taylor—his word was always equal to his bond—and so good people, unless biased by some extraordinary political affinity and hopes, in the end fully trusted him.

In this letter the writer would emphasize General Taylor's views of war and of conquest. It seems to us now a grand destiny for the United States to have mowed and harvested its full swath of territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific; but it gives greater satisfaction to the philanthropic mind to be assured that really nothing was taken from Mexico by conquest. The additional territory came after the war, it is true, but more by the powers of negotiation and the rights of purchase than from the potency of our arms.

Digitized by Google

The high principles of General Taylor enunciated in the Allison letter were not only watch-words in a successful political campaign, but, like the principles of Washington to which Taylor briefly and cogently refers, they should be treasured, and should influence American patriots from generation to generation.

It is said that for a long time there was a coolness between General Taylor and Daniel Webster. From the best authority it is learned that Webster wrote one of his admirable letters, full of heartiness and congratulation, to General Taylor just after the battle of Buena Vista. To this letter Mr. Webster for more than a year received no reply. Chafing somewhat under this apparent discourtesy, Webster became cool toward our hero. Further, Webster naturally had his own strong aspirations to be the nominee of the "Whig party." He did not think that a soldier like Taylor, however able he might be, would be so well fitted for the presidency as an already recognized statesman; for example, he much preferred Mr. Clay, or some other prominent Whig leader, who had during the vigor and activity of his manhood served in the councils of the nation, and made public measures the study of his life.

Under the inspiration of these feelings he once remarked, in substance, that General Taylor's was a nomination that ought not to be made. Still, after it was made it should be remembered that Webster engaged actively in the political canvass, supporting the "Whig party," and General Taylor as its nominee, with all his inimitable eloquence and powerful influence. How warmly and actively after the elec-

Digitized by Google

tion Mr. Webster sustained Taylor's administration, eventful as it was even in its brevity, we shall see hereafter.

It would be of interest to trace the gradual consolidation of influences, the separation and regathering of the political elements by small meetings, by ward gatherings, by county and State conventions, by the letters of statesmen, by monthly, weekly, and daily publications; and it would be of more especial interest to us to see how the little family at Baton Rouge worried on from day to day amid the extraordinary publicity that these interests gave to every member of the household, and to notice how the sensitive mind of General Taylor was affected by the praise and blame borne in upon him by every breeze and from every quarter; but, for the sake of reasonable brevity, we forbear.

The experiences of a political canvass in the United States are too much alike to admit of a detailed record. Every name made prominent for a candidacy for high office is for a time subjected to unusual praise or blame. The common phrase is, "it is torn to shreds." Accusations undreamed of are often put forth; but if the name can bear the pounding and the tearing, and pass through a fire without too much burning and blackening it becomes the stronger for the process. It wins the admiration, and after the election—if elected—that name regains its wonted valuation or exceeds its old ascendency. There seems to be a universal agreement thereafter among good citizens to quash every indictment and withdraw every charge; so that we will not follow General Taylor and those who loved him, just as we did in the Mexican campaign,

Digitized by Google

through the curious conflicts to which his political warfare subjected him.

The Democratic National Convention of 1848 met, in May, in the city of Baltimore. General Lewis Cass, of Michigan, was nominated, on the fourth ballot, for President, and William O. Butler, of Kentucky, was nominated for Vice-President. Severe controversies shook that convention on account of two delegations from New York presenting themselves for admission, one of which, leaning strongly to the "Free-Soil" movement, finally withdrew, and caused considerable dissatisfaction; and this faction, in the ensuing election, induced its followers to give their votes mainly for Mr. Van Buren and the Free-Soilers.

Again, one Southern delegate introduced a resolution which acted like a firebrand in the convention. It was simply an effort to nationalize slavery. The objectionable resolution was rejected by a large majority; yet delegates from several Southern States made speeches and voted for it, and so there was a resultant division of feeling on this account.

Southern men declared: "Wherever slavery exists it is like a powder magazine, or a series of them, and we politically demand complete protection against the firebrands that abolitionists and Free-Soilers are continually attempting to hurl into the explosives." We may say that even as early as 1848 the Democratic party itself showed signs of breakage.

The Whig Convention assembled a little later, on June 7th, in the city of Philadelphia. On the very first ballot General Taylor received 111 votes for the presidency; Henry Clay, 97; General Scott, 43; Daniel Webster, 22; and there were 6 scattering

Digitized by Google

votes. The fourth ballot showed, for Taylor, 171, against 107 for the other candidates; he was thereupon declared the nominee of the party, and Millard Fillmore, of New York, was nominated for the vice-presidency. So that Taylor and Fillmore constituted the Whig ticket for the following November election.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ELECTION AND INAUGURATION.

Receptions and public dinners—The inaugural ball—The address as published—Clear enunciation of principles—The Cabinet—The household at the White House—Mrs. Bettie Bliss at a public gathering—Some great names associated with Zachary Taylor.

IN the process of time the election came. Horace Greeley, in his American Conflict, says: "General Cass carried fifteen States, choosing 137 electors. Mr. Van Buren carried no electors, but received a respectable support in every free State, Rhode Island and New Jersey excepted. New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont each gave a larger popular vote to him than to General Cass; Wisconsin gave him nearly as many as to General Taylor. The entire popular vote (South Carolina not casting any) stood: Taylor and Fillmore, 1,360,752; Cass and Butler, 1,219,962; Van Buren and Adams, 291,342. General Taylor had a majority of the electoral and a plurality of the popular vote, both in the free and slave States, respectively."

General Taylor, considering the character of the vote itself, which gave him a large plurality of all the votes of the United States, became the President not simply of a party but of his country. It is true that

Digitized by Google

every President of the United States, however elected, has been rather the President of the whole people than of the party which elected him; but General Taylor, considering his Southern interests, and the intense partisan spirit of his section existing at that time, was eminently the President of the republic.

By this election, then, Zachary Taylor reached the consummation of his wishes, and for a time was borne along steadily upon the popular wave. Yet the times themselves were too turbulent to allow the new President though the choice of the people, however large the majority, to remain long in the quiet enjoyment of the vantage he had gained. It requires a stout ship to withstand a rugged sea. There were the usual scenes in Washington on March 4, 1849. Everything about the Capitol was arranged in the usual manner. Portions of it were closed for the day, proper guards established at the outer gates, in the basement, and in the hallways, with some reserve force at hand ready for any emergency.

A field battery was placed east of the Capitol, properly manned for the salute. At ten o'clock in the morning the sergeant-at-arms directed that all the doors of the Senate chamber should be opened. It took but a few moments after the opening for the throng of ladies to fill their gallery to overflowing.

The small space allotted to the newspaper men was soon overfull; and it is not easy to depict the struggling efforts of men of all classes and conditions to pass through the narrow doorways and so find seats or standing-room in the larger gallery receptacle permitted to the crowd. Of course vast

Digitized by Google

numbers were disappointed and obliged to withdraw. These soon hastened out to join the masses, that could only that day look at the great buildings and catch perhaps but one glimpse of the public men who were to be actors in the inaugural scenes.

Some little business had been transacted by the Senate, and a single resolution adopted without division. After this, the out-going Vice-President, George M. Dallas, and the newly elected, Millard Fillmore, entered, arm in arm, the southern door, and walked down the aisle, presenting themselves before Mr. Atchison, who had been temporarily called to the chair. He administered the oath to Mr. Fillmore, and then gave place to him on the platform as the new presiding officer of the Senate. At once, without embarrassment, Mr. Fillmore took his stand and delivered an interesting, conservative, and eloquent speech. The address, however, was brief. At its close came in, two by two, the dignified justices of the Supreme Court in their court robes, and they were followed by the gayly uniformed diplomatic corps, between forty and fifty in number if we include the several *attachés* who accompanied them. The justices occupied seats in the area to the left of the Vice-President, and the foreign delegations those to the right. Next came three of the old Cabinet—James Buchanan, Secretary of State; William L. Marcy, Secretary of War; and Reverdy Johnson, Attorney-General. They were seated to the right of Mr. Fillmore, on the floor.

Twelve o'clock, the long-expected hour, at last arrived, but neither the new nor the old President had yet made his appearance. The delay was unusual, and there was manifest uneasiness and im-

Digitized by Google

patience, from Mr. Fillmore's desk to the remote corners of the galleries. A half-hour which passed seemed an age. What occasioned the delay was not, however, explained, but probably arose from the usual underestimate that public men place upon distances in Washington. A stranger seldom believes, before trial, that there are two miles from the War Department or White House to the Capitol.

Judging by the correspondence and by the statements in the public press which had been made concerning the relationship between Presidents Polk and Taylor from the time he had become a candidate until the date of this inauguration, these two were not very warm personal friends. They were certainly, as everybody knew, political enemies. But at last President Polk, doubtless very weary with his hard and exciting term of office, was indeed glad to see his successor arrive. He extended to him a cordial greeting, and the two rode in the same carriage from the President's house, along Pennsylvania Avenue, to the Capitol grounds, and then walked arm in arm to the Senate chamber. It was 12.30 P. M. when they entered and took seats near the front, beside Mr. Dallas.

President Taylor then spent a few moments in conversation with Justice McLean and the Chief-Justice, Taney. This interview, doubtless, was to acquaint General Taylor with the part he was to play in the further ceremonies of the morning. After the usual preliminary exercises the Senate took a recess, and the President-elect led the way to the eastern portico of the Capitol, where the masses of his fellow-citizens had been all the morning assembling. Large numbers had come in the grand

Digitized by Google

procession. The military escort and reserve of policemen were standing, as usual, near the saluting battery.

The crowd was estimated at upward of ten thousand people. At the appearance of the old general, who was so familiarly called "Rough and Ready," cheer followed cheer. The acclaim was magnified by repeated discharges of cannon. The venerable Chief-Justice stepped to the front, and, facing General Taylor, who seemed to be absorbed and somewhat abashed by his new surroundings, administered the oath of office with solemnity. The new President, "pulling down his spectacles, which had heretofore slept in his hair," at once proceeded to read from a manuscript his brief inaugural address.

Of course but a few of the host from the open grounds below, being far away, could do more than gather here and there a sentiment of the address; but the people knew their man; they knew that he would always be true to the interests of the nation; and they enjoyed looking at him while he, in his quiet, modest manner, went through the process of delivery. As soon as it was ended the cheering was renewed, and the national salute was fired from the waiting battery. There seemed to be then for the new Administration and the nation nothing but joy and gladness. The usual receptions, dinners, and gala assemblages followed in the evening. The new President appeared for a short time at the inaugural ball. He went to the theatre, which was, of course, filled to repletion, and performed all the perfunctory and well-established duties which custom had already introduced and rendered imperative on that quadrennial occasion. Perhaps no better insight can be gained of the hopes, the fears, and the patriotic faith

Digitized by Google

of General Taylor than can be obtained from the inaugural itself, which is remarkable for its simplicity and directness. Our readers will enjoy the full report of it that follows:

"Elected by the American people to the highest office known to our laws, I appear here to take the oath prescribed by the Constitution, and, in compliance with a time-honored custom, to address those who are now assembled.

"The confidence and respect shown by my countrymen in calling me to be the Chief Magistrate of a republic holding a high rank among the nations of the earth, have inspired me with feelings of the most profound gratitude; but when I reflect that the acceptance of the office which their partiality has bestowed imposes the discharge of the most arduous duties, and involves the weightiest obligations, I am conscious that the position which I have been called to fill, though sufficient to satisfy the loftiest ambition, is surrounded by fearful responsibilities. Happily, however, in the performance of my new duties I shall not be without able co-operation.

"The legislative and judicial branches of the Government present prominent examples of distinguished civil attainments and matured experience; and it shall be my endeavor to call to my assistance in the executive departments individuals whose talents, integrity, and purity of character will furnish ample guarantees for the faithful and honorable performance of the trusts to be committed to their charge. With such aids, and an honest purpose to do what is right, I hope to execute diligently, impartially, and for the best interests of the country, the manifold duties devolved upon me.

Digitized by Google

"In the discharge of these duties my guide will be the Constitution, which I this day swear to preserve, protect, and defend. For the interpretation of that instrument I shall look to the decisions of the judicial tribunals established by this authority, and to the practice of the Government under the earlier Presidents, who had so large a share in its formation.

"To the example of those illustrious patriots I shall always defer with reverence, and especially to his example who was, by so many titles, the Father of his Country.

"To command the army and navy of the United States; with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, and to appoint embassadors and other officers; to give to Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend such measures as it shall judge to be necessary; and to take care that the laws shall be faithfully executed—these are the most important functions intrusted to the President by the Constitution; and it may be expected that I shall briefly indicate the principles which will control me in their execution.

"Chosen by the body of the people, under the assurance that my administration would be devoted to the welfare of the whole country, and not to the support of any particular section or merely local interest, I this day renew the declarations I have heretofore made, and proclaim my fixed determination to maintain, to the extent of my ability, the Government in its original purity, and to adopt, as the basis of my public policy, those great republican doctrines which constitute the strength of our national existence.

Digitized by Google

"In reference to the army and navy, lately employed with so much distinction in active service, care shall be taken to insure the highest condition of efficiency; and in furtherance of that object, the military and naval schools, sustained by the liberality of Congress, shall receive the especial attention of the Executive.

"As American freemen we can not but sympathize in all efforts to extend the blessings of political and civil liberty; but at the same time we are warned by the admonitions of history and the voice of our own beloved Washington, to abstain from entangling alliances with foreign nations. In all disputes between conflicting Governments it is our interest, not less than our duty, to remain strictly neutral; while our geographical position, the genius of our institutions and our people, the advancing spirit of civilization, and, above all, the dictates of religion, direct us to the cultivation of peaceful and friendly relations with all other powers.

"It is to be hoped that no international questions can now arise which a government, confident in its own strength, and resolved to protect its own just rights, may not settle by wise negotiation; and it eminently becomes a government like our own, founded on the morality and intelligence of its citizens, and upheld by their affections, to exhaust every resort of honorable diplomacy, before appealing to arms.

"In the conduct of our foreign relations I shall conform to these views, as I believe them essential to the best interests and the true honor of the country.

"The appointing power vested in the President

Digitized by Google

imposes delicate and honorable duties. So far as it is possible to be informed, I shall make honesty, capacity, and fidelity indispensable prerequisites to the bestowal of office; and absence of either of these qualities shall be deemed sufficient cause for removal.

"It shall be my duty to recommend such constitutional measures to Congress as may be necessary and proper to secure encouragement and protection to the great interests of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; to improve our rivers and harbors; to provide for the speedy extinguishment of the public debt; to enforce a strict accountability on the part of all officers of the Government, and the utmost economy in all public expenditures; but it is for the wisdom of Congress itself, in which all legislative powers are vested, by their consent to regulate these and other matters of domestic policy.

"I shall look with confidence to the enlightened patriotism of that body to adopt such measures of conciliation as may harmonize conflicting interests and tend to perpetuate that union which should be the paramount object of our hopes and affections. In any action calculated to promote an object so near the heart of every one who truly loves his country, I will zealously unite with the co-ordinate branches of Government.

"In conclusion, I congratulate you, my fellow-citizens, upon the high state of prosperity to which the goodness of divine Providence has conducted our common country. Let us invoke a continuance of the same protecting care which has led us from small beginnings to the eminence we this day occupy; and let us seek to deserve that continuance by

Digitized by Google

prudence and moderation in our councils, by well-directed attempts to assuage the bitterness which too often makes unavoidable differences of opinions, by the promulgation and practice of just and liberal principles, and by an enlarged patriotism which shall acknowledge no limits but those of our own wide-spread republic."

With his usual promptitude he selected the new Cabinet: For *Secretary of State*, John M. Clayton, of Delaware; for *Secretary of the Treasury*, William M. Meredith, of Pennsylvania; for *Secretary of War*, George W. Crawford, of Georgia; for *Secretary of the Navy*, William B. Preston, of Virginia; for *Secretary of the Interior*, Thomas Ewing, of Ohio; for *Postmaster-General*, Jacob Collamer, of Vermont; all of whom were promptly confirmed by the Senate without objection.

As usual after the 4th of March, the inhabitants of the White House were speedily changed. During Mr. Polk's administration everything had combined to make social life at the President's mansion—and, in fact, at the capital itself—of a serious character. First there was a preparation for a long war with Mexico; then the actual war, with all the heavy responsibilities always at such times necessarily devolving upon the Executive. There were already strained relations between the North and the South, and constant forebodings of some great political and social upheaval. The President's wife, Mrs. Polk, was of a domestic turn, and a woman of refinement and piety. In view of all the circumstances, it is no wonder that people said she was "grave and formal." Certainly he and she alike were of a serious natural disposition; and the times themselves, a little out of

Digitized by Google

joint, gave an extraordinary somber hue to our President's habitation.

But now the war was successfully over. The conservative Whig party, then eminently the Union party of the nation, had had a large popular victory. General Taylor, though retiring, had always a cheerful manner, and ever made those around him, as far as he could, contented and sunshiny. His good wife, surely his true friend, did not like the new order of things, and seemed bound to carry out her predictions that city life would never agree with her or the family. Yet the general had that beautiful daughter, Mrs. "Bettie" Bliss, only twenty-two years of age, and her accomplished husband, Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel William W. S. Bliss, who had long been his close friend and confidential adviser and adjutant.

Of course youth and beauty, inspired by the bright changes in the whole country, came from near and far and clustered around these noble representatives of our American life. Mrs. Bliss was particularly charming and popular. Her intelligence was equal to her grace, and in a few days after her entrance to the White House it was admitted that no princess could do the honors of a palace better than she; for her mother insisted on keeping in the background, where she, in comparative retirement, endeavored to make the most of what she hardly enjoyed. Doubtless, however, she was still proud of her good husband, though he had left the army against her wishes, and glad that her daughter had so much genuine independence, energy, and pluck, and was becoming properly appreciated in every quarter.

Mrs. Holloway, in her Ladies of the White House,

Digitized by Google

gives this picture of Mrs. Bliss at a large public gathering. After describing a throng of ladies in costly attire, she says: "Then behind these came Mrs. Bliss, plainly dressed in white, a simple flower in her hair, timid and faltering, yet with an expression in her eye that showed she was Zachary Taylor's favorite child. The expectations of the vast crowd were for the moment realized; then followed expressions of enthusiasm that were overwhelming."

There is always in the social life in and around the White House a commingling of public men—men who influence their age, and who, with their families, modify, if they do not regulate, the manners and customs of the capital. Henry Clay was still there, though seventy-three years of age, recently re-elected to the Senate. General Cass, with his sturdy manners, represented the Northwest; he had energy and enterprise in his composition. Webster, the New England orator, upon whose face no man could look without feeling impressed with the grandeur of the man, was now more than ever co-operating with Clay in compromise measures, and rivaled him in being the observed of all observers. Thomas H. Benton, stanch for the Union, was a tower of strength among his Southern *confrères*. Calhoun was growing weaker, and his frame more and more feeble; still, he kept his seat in the Senate, and influenced the State-supremacy measures more than any other. Some young men were coming in. The President's son-in-law, Colonel Jefferson Davis, whom we have met before on the battle-fields of Mexico, following the doctrines of Calhoun, was soon to be a leader in the errant pathways of that statesman.

Digitized by Google

Stephen A. Douglass, the rival of Lincoln, the stout young Democrat from Illinois, had just appeared in Congress. We find here also at the capital, mingling actively in society, another fine figure, a man who was almost perfect in his abundant and eloquent utterances—William H. Seward, of New York. Thomas Corwin and S. P. Chase were just emerging from Ohio politics and taking their stand at the capital as national men. Here were also found John Bell, Nathan Clifford, and Hannibal Hamlin, whose names were familiar to all men of the last generation. The hearty John P. Hale, the remarkable "Free-Soiler" from New Hampshire, and James M. Mason, his diametric opposite in politics, from Virginia, were together in the Senate. Here were found the "Fire-eaters," as they were called—those who were openly advocating secession unless their own interpretation of the Constitution should obtain; abolitionists who believed that the Constitution had better be broken into fragments rather than that slavery should continue; *Free-Soilers*, who at a later day laid the foundation of the great Republican party, of which Lincoln was at last the acknowledged head; the Whigs, who as yet, North and South, stood shoulder to shoulder for the American Union; and also the devoted and characteristic representatives of the old Democratic party, who thus far, like Andrew Jackson, opposed themselves vigorously to all ideas of nullification or incipient secession.

Mr. Blaine says, in his Twenty Years of Congress: "At no time, before or since, in the history of the Senate, had its membership been so illustrious, its weight of character and ability so great. . . . The

Digitized by Google

period marked the meeting and dividing line between two generations of statesmen. The eminent men who had succeeded the leaders of the Revolutionary era were passing away, but the most brilliant of their members were still lingering, unabated in natural force, resplendent in personal fame. Their successors, if not their equals in public regard and confidence, were already upon the stage preparing for and destined to act in the bloodiest and most memorable of civil struggles."

From the above picture it will be easily seen that a family should have no ordinary ability and energy, if not experience, to hold its own at such a period in Washington life; and still stronger would it have to be in every proper requirement to take the lead and maintain itself on the advanced line where social life was so closely allied as it then was to the political. It requires but little imagination to understand some of the discouragements and apprehensions of General Taylor's household at this time. Southern men who had sustained him strongly were dissatisfied with him because he was too national in his views. Northern partisans who had sustained him were dissatisfied because he did not go far enough for them—was not sufficiently pronounced against the extension of slavery; and, indeed, it was not long before he began to realize that his wife's instincts in their forebodings had merely trumped up the future. He decided, however, publicly and privately, like a man; he encountered ridicule, contemptuous speeches, hurtful innuendoes in the press, and unkind remarks that came to his ears, and these affected the old man's daily life not a little, yet he diligently observed what was going on far and near.

Digitized by Google

He kept before him the secret plotters and their plottings. He knew who were organizing to strike, as in the days of Jackson, fatal blows against the republic, and with set teeth and firm voice he said: "I will put them down! Yes, I can do it with Southern volunteers!"

The first summer passed with a storm here and there, with some murmurings like those of approaching thunder-claps and the rumblings of earthquakes, but there was no actual breach of the peace in any direction during that period. When Congress came together in December, Taylor's message was on the right side—the side of the Constitution and the Union. Mr. Blaine writes that that message "proved a tower of strength to the friends of the Union, and a heavy blow to the secession element which was rampant in Congress." A few extracts from this timely message will be in place, to exhibit the character and principles of Zachary Taylor:

"Sixty years have elapsed since the establishment of this Government, and the Congress of the United States again assembles to legislate for an empire of freemen. The predictions of evil prophets, who formerly pretended to foretell the downfall of our institutions, are remembered only to be derided, and the United States of America at this moment present to the world the most stable and permanent government on earth.

"Such is the result of the labors of those who have gone before us. Upon Congress will eminently depend the future maintenance of our system of free government, and the transmission of it unimpaired to posterity.

"We are at peace with all the other nations of

Digitized by Google

the world, and seek to maintain our cherished relations of amity with them. During the past year we have been blessed by a kind Providence with an abundance of the fruits of the earth; and although the destroying angel for a time visited extensive portions of our territory with the ravages of a dreadful pestilence, yet the Almighty has deigned to stay his hand and to restore the inestimable blessings of general health to a people who have acknowledged his power, deprecated his wrath, and implored his merciful protection.

"While enjoying the benefits of amicable intercourse with foreign nations, we have not been insensible to the distractions and wars which have prevailed in other quarters of the world. It is a proper theme of thanksgiving to Him who rules the destinies of nations, that we have been able to maintain amid all these contests an independent and neutral position toward all belligerent powers. . . . With the Republic of Mexico it is our true policy to cultivate the most friendly relations. Since the ratification of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo nothing has occurred of a serious character to disturb them. A faithful observance of the treaty, and a sincere respect for her rights, can not fail to secure the lasting confidence and friendship of that republic. . . . The commissioner on the part of the United States for marking the boundary between the two republics, though delayed in reaching San Diego by unforeseen obstacles, arrived at that place within a short period after the time required by the treaty, and was there joined by the commissioner on the part of Mexico. They entered upon their duties, and at the date of the latest intelligence from that quarter some prog-

Digitized by Google

ress had been made in the survey. . . . In the adjustment of the claims of American citizens on Mexico, provided for by the late treaty, the employment of counsel on the part of the Government may become important for the purpose of assisting the commissioners in protecting the interests of the United States. I recommend the subject to the early and favorable consideration of Congress. . . . The extension of the coast of the United States on the Pacific, and the unexampled rapidity with which the inhabitants of California especially are increasing in numbers, have imparted new consequence to our relations with the other countries whose territories border upon that ocean. It is probable that the intercourse between those countries and our possessions in that quarter, particularly with the Republic of Chili, will become extensive and mutually advantageous in proportion as California and Oregon shall increase in population and wealth. It is desirable, therefore, that this Government should do everything in its power to foster and strengthen its relations with those states, and that the spirit of amity between us should be mutual and cordial.

"I recommend the observance of the same course toward all other American states. The United States stands as the great American power, to which, as their natural ally and friend, they will always be disposed first to look for mediation and assistance in the event of any collision between them and any European nation. As such, we may often kindly mediate in their behalf, without entangling ourselves in foreign wars or unnecessary controversies. Whenever the faith of our treaties with any of them shall require our interference, we must necessarily

Digitized by Google

interpose. . . . Your attention is earnestly invited to an amendment of our existing laws relating to the African slave trade, with a view to the effectual suppression of that barbarous traffic. It is not to be denied that this trade is still in part carried on by means of vessels built in the United States and owned or navigated by some of our citizens. The correspondence between the Department of State and the minister and consul of the United States at Rio de Janeiro, which has from time to time been laid before Congress, represents that it is a customary device to evade the penalties of our laws by means of sea-letters. Vessels sold in Brazil, when provided with such papers by the consul, instead of returning to the United States for a new register, proceed at once to the coast of Africa for the purpose of obtaining cargoes of slaves. Much additional information of the same character has recently been transmitted to the Department of State. It has not been considered the policy of our laws to subject an American citizen, who in a foreign country purchases a vessel built in the United States, to the inconvenience of sending her home for a new register before permitting her to proceed on a voyage. Any alteration of the laws which might have a tendency to impede the free transfer of property in vessels between our citizens, or the free navigation of those vessels between different parts of the world, when employed in lawful commerce, should be well and cautiously considered; but I trust that your wisdom will devise a method by which our general policy in this respect may be preserved, and at the same time the abuse of our flag by means of sea-letters in the manner indicated may be prevented. . . .

Digitized by Google

A contract having been concluded with the state of Nicaragua by a company composed of American citizens, for the purpose of constructing a ship canal through the territory of that state, to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, I have directed the negotiation of a treaty with Nicaragua, pledging both Governments to protect those who shall engage in and perfect the work. All other nations are invited by the state of Nicaragua to enter into the same treaty stipulations with her; and the benefit to be derived by each from such an arrangement will be the protection of this great interoceanic communication against any power which might seek to obstruct it or to monopolize its advantages. All states entering into such a treaty will enjoy the right of passage through the canal on payment of the same tolls.

"The work, if constructed under these guarantees, will become a bond of peace instead of a subject of contention and strife between the nations of the earth. Should the great maritime states of Europe consent to this arrangement (and we have no reason to suppose that a proposition so reasonable and honorable will be opposed by any), the energies of their people and ours will co-operate in promoting the success of the enterprise. I do not recommend any appropriation from the national Treasury for this enterprise, nor do I believe that such an appropriation is necessary. Private enterprise, if properly protected, will complete the work should it prove to be feasible. The parties who have procured the charter from Nicaragua for its construction desire no assistance from this Government beyond its protection; and they profess that, having examined the proposed line of communication, they

Digitized by Google

will be ready to commence the undertaking whenever that protection shall be extended to them. Should there appear to be reason, on examining the whole evidence, to entertain a serious doubt of the practicability of constructing such a canal, that doubt could be speedily solved by an actual exploration of the route.

"Should such a work be constructed, under the common protection of all nations, for equal benefits to all, it would be neither just nor expedient that any great maritime state should command the communication. The territory through which the canal may be opened ought to be freed from the claims of any foreign power. No such power should occupy a position that would enable it hereafter to exercise so controlling an influence over the commerce of the world, or to obstruct a highway which ought to be dedicated to the common use of mankind. . . . We have reason to hope that the proposed railroad across the Isthmus of Panama will be successfully constructed, under the protection of the treaty with New Granada, ratified and exchanged by my predecessor on the 10th day of June, 1848, which guarantees the perfect neutrality of the Isthmus, and the rights of sovereignty and property of New Granada over that territory, "with a view that the free transit from ocean to ocean may not be interrupted or embarrassed" during the existence of the treaty. It is our policy to encourage every practicable route across the Isthmus which connects North and South America, either by railroad or canal, which the energy and enterprise of our citizens may induce them to complete; and I consider it obligatory upon me to adopt that policy, especially in consequence of

Digitized by Google

the absolute necessity of facilitating intercourse with our possessions on the Pacific.

"The position of the Sandwich Islands with reference to the territory of the United States on the Pacific, the success of our persevering and benevolent citizens who have repaired to that remote quarter in Christianizing the natives and inducing them to adopt a system of government and laws suited to their capacity and wants, and the use made by our numerous whale-ships of the harbors of the islands as places of resort for obtaining refreshments and repairs, all combine to render their destiny peculiarly interesting to us. It is our duty to encourage the authorities of those islands in their efforts to improve and elevate the moral and political condition of the inhabitants; and we should make reasonable allowances for the difficulties inseparable from this task. We desire that the islands may maintain their independence, and that other nations should concur with us in this sentiment. We could in no event be indifferent to their passing under the dominion of any other power. The principal commercial states have in this a common interest, and it is to be hoped that no one of them will attempt to interpose obstacles to the entire independence of the islands. . . . I recommend a revision of the existing tariff, and its adjustment on a basis which may augment the revenue. I do not doubt the right or duty of Congress to encourage domestic industry, which is the great source of national as well as individual prosperity. I look to the wisdom and patriotism of Congress for the adoption of a system which may place home labor at last on a sure and permanent footing, and, by due en-

Digitized by Google

couragement of manufactures, give a new and increased stimulus to agriculture, and promote the development of our vast resources and the extension of our commerce. Believing that to the attainment of these ends (as well as the necessary augmentation of the revenue and the prevention of frauds) a system of specific duties is best adapted, I strongly recommend to Congress the adoption of that system, fixing the duties at rates high enough to afford substantial and sufficient encouragement to our own industry, and at the same time so adjusted as to insure stability. . . . No civil government having been provided for California, the people of that Territory, impelled by the necessities of their political condition, recently met in convention for the purpose of forming a constitution and state government, which the latest advices give me reason to suppose has been accomplished; and it is believed that they will shortly apply for the admission of California into the Union as a sovereign State. Should such be the case, and should their constitution be conformable to the requisitions of the Constitution of the United States, I recommend their application to the favorable consideration of Congress.

"The people of New Mexico will also, it is believed, at no very distant period present themselves for admission into the Union. Preparatory to the admission of California and New Mexico, the people of each will have instituted for themselves a republican form of government, laying its foundations in such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

Digitized by Google

"By awaiting their action, all causes of uneasiness may be avoided, and confidence and kind feeling be preserved. With a view of maintaining the harmony and tranquility so dear to all, we should abstain from the introduction of those exciting topics of a sectional character which have hitherto produced painful apprehensions in the public mind; and I repeat the solemn warning of the first and most illustrious of my predecessors, against furnishing 'any ground for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations.'

"A collector has been appointed at San Francisco, under the act of Congress extending the revenue laws over California, and measures have been taken to organize the custom-house at that and the other ports mentioned in that act, at the earliest period practicable. The collector proceeded overland, and advices have not yet been received of his arrival at San Francisco. Meanwhile, it is understood that the customs have continued to be collected there by officers acting under the military authority, as they were during the administration of my predecessor. It will, I think, be expedient to confirm the collections thus made, and direct the avails (after such allowances as Congress may think fit to authorize) to be expended within the Territory, or to be paid into the Treasury for the purpose of meeting appropriations for the improvement of its rivers and harbors. . . . The great mineral wealth of California, and the advantages which its ports and harbors, and those of Oregon, afford to commerce, especially with the islands of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the populous regions of eastern Asia, make it certain that there will arise in a few

Digitized by Google

years large and prosperous communities on our Western coast. It therefore becomes important that a line of communication, the best and most expeditious which the nature of the country will admit of, should be opened within the territory of the United States, from the navigable waters of the Atlantic, on the Gulf of Mexico, to the Pacific. Opinion, as elicited and expressed by two large conventions lately assembled at St. Louis and Memphis, points to a railroad as that which, if practicable, will best meet the wishes and wants of the country. But while this, if in successful operation, would be a work of great national importance, and of a value to the country which it would be difficult to estimate, it ought also to be regarded as an undertaking of vast magnitude and expense, and one which must, if it be indeed practicable, encounter many difficulties in its construction and use. Therefore, to avoid failure and disappointment, to enable Congress to judge whether, in the condition of the country through which it must pass, the work be feasible; and if it be found so, whether it should be undertaken as a national improvement, or left to individual enterprise; and, in the latter alternative, what aid if any, ought to be extended to it by the Government, I orecmmend, as a preliminary measure, a careful reconnaissance of the several proposed routes by a scientific corps, and a report as to the practicability of making such a road, with an estimate of the cost of its construction and support. . . . I recommend early appropriations for continuing the river and harbor improvements which have been already begun, and also for the construction of those for which estimates have been made, as well as for ex-

Digitized by Google

aminations and estimates preparatory to the commencement of such others as the wants of the country, and especially the advance of our population over new districts and the extension of commerce, may render necessary. . . . The cession of territory made by the late treaty with Mexico has greatly extended our exposed frontier, and rendered its defense more difficult. That treaty has also brought us under obligations to Mexico, to comply with which a military force is requisite. But our military establishment is not materially changed, as to its efficiency, from the condition in which it stood before the commencement of the Mexican War. Some addition to it will therefore be necessary; and I recommend to the favorable consideration of Congress an increase of the several corps of the army at our distant Western posts, as proposed in the accompanying report of the Secretary of War. . . . The plan proposed for retiring disabled officers, and providing an asylum for such of the rank and file as from age, wounds, and other infirmities occasioned by service, have become unfit to perform their respective duties, is recommended as a means of increasing the efficiency of the army, and as an act of justice due from a grateful country to the faithful soldier. . . . Wherever our national vessels have gone they have been received with respect, our officers have been treated with kindness and courtesy, and they have on all occasions pursued a strict neutrality, in accordance with the policy of our Government. The naval force at present in commission is as large as is admissible with the number of men authorized by Congress to be employed. . . . By an act of Congress passed August 14, 1848, provision was made

Digitized by Google

for extending post-office and mail accommodations to California and Oregon. Exertions have been made to execute that law; but the limited provisions of the act, the inadequacy of the means it authorizes, the ill adaptation of our post-office laws to the situation of that country, and the measure of compensation for services allowed by those laws, compared with the prices of labor and rents in California, render those exertions in a great degree ineffectual. More particular and efficient provision by law is required on this subject. . . . It is submitted to the wisdom of Congress whether a further reduction of postage should not now be made, more particularly on the letter correspondence. This should be relieved from the unjust burden of transporting and delivering the franked matter of Congress, for which public service provision should be made from the Treasury. I confidently believe that a change may safely be made reducing all single-letter postage to the uniform rate of five cents, regardless of distance, without thereby imposing any greater tax on the Treasury than would constitute a very moderate compensation for this public service; and I therefore respectfully recommend such a reduction. Should Congress prefer to abolish the franking privilege entirely, it seems probable that no demand on the Treasury would result from the proposed reduction of postage. Whether any further diminution should now be made, or the result of the reduction to five cents which I have recommended should be first tested, is submitted to your decision. . . . Among the duties assigned by the Constitution to the General Government is one of local and limited application, but not on that account the less obligatory: I allude

Digitized by Google

to the trust committed to Congress as the exclusive legislator and sole guardian of the interests of the District of Columbia. I beg to commend these interests to your kind attention. As the national metropolis, the City of Washington must be an object of general interest; and, founded as it was under the auspices of him whose immortal name it bears, its claims to the fostering care of Congress present themselves with additional strength. Whatever can contribute to its prosperity must enlist the feelings of its constitutional guardians, and command their favorable consideration. . . . Our Government is one of limited powers, and its successful administration eminently depends on the confinement of each of its co-ordinate branches within its own appropriate sphere. The first section of the Constitution ordains that 'all legislative powers therein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.' The Executive has authority to recommend (not to dictate) measures to Congress. Having performed that duty, the executive department of the Government can not rightfully control the decision of Congress on any subject of legislation, nor act until that decision shall have been officially submitted to the President for approval. The check provided by the Constitution in the clause conferring the qualified veto will never be exercised by me except in the cases contemplated by the fathers of the republic. I view it as an extreme measure, to be resorted to only in extraordinary cases—as where it may become necessary to defend the Executive against the encroachments of the legislative power, or to prevent hasty and inconsiderate and unconstitutional legisla-

Digitized by Google

tion. By cautiously confining this remedy within the sphere prescribed to it in the contemporaneous expositions of the framers of the Constitution, the will of the people, legitimately expressed on all subjects of legislation, through their constitutional organs, the Senators and Representatives of the United States, will have its full effect. As indispensable to the preservation of our system of self-government, the independence of the Representatives of the States and the people is guaranteed by the Constitution, and they owe no responsibility to any human power but their constituents. By holding the Representative responsible only to the people, and exempting him from all other influences, we elevate the character of the constituent, and quicken his sense of responsibility to his country. It is under these circumstances only that the elector can feel that, in the choice of the law-maker, he is himself truly a component part of the sovereign power of the nation. With equal care we should study to defend the rights of the executive and judicial departments. Our Government can only be preserved in its purity by the suppression and entire elimination of every claim or tendency of one co-ordinate branch to encroachment upon another. With the strict observance of this rule and the other injunctions of the Constitution; with a sedulous inculcation of that respect and love for the union of the States which our fathers cherished and enjoined upon their children; and with the aid of that overruling Providence which has so long and so kindly guarded our liberties and institutions, we may reasonably expect to transmit them, with their innumerable blessings, to the remotest posterity.

Digitized by Google

"But attachment to the union of the States should be habitually fostered in every American heart. For more than half a century, during which kingdoms and empires have fallen, this Union has stood unshaken. The patriots who formed it have long since descended to the grave, yet still it remains, the proudest monument to their memory, and the object of affection and admiration with every one worthy to bear the American name. In my judgment, its dissolution would be the greatest of calamities, and to avert that should be the study of every American. Upon its preservation must depend our own happiness and that of countless generations to come. Whatever dangers may threaten it, I shall stand by it, and maintain it in its integrity to the full extent of the obligations imposed and the power conferred upon me by the Constitution."

No one can fail to see in this message a singular inspiration. Here are visions of the future which have now been gloriously fulfilled. Taylor begins by decrying the false prophets, and predicting the stability and permanency of our institutions. When Clay was hesitating, and Webster full of forebodings, Taylor was confident, and putting upon Congress squarely the plain duty of sustaining and transmitting our grand history unimpaired. Without apology or variableness, he owns to a "kind Providence" in the abundance, and acknowledges the hand of the Almighty in calamity, in power, and in inestimable blessings. Meanwhile his heart rejoices in our national peace. Next, we have a reassertion of our abiding principle of standing aloof from the complications and strifes of other peoples; and he finds the results a source of thanksgiving to the great Ruler

Digitized by Google

of Nations. The satisfaction with the Mexican treaty naturally found expression here, and also the urging upon Congress the settlements of claims of American citizens whom the war had ruined. His suggestions or hints how to bind the new Territories on the Pacific to the Eastern States, and how to draw the American Governments into closer commercial and permanent relations, gave problems whose solution has since become replete with historic interest. Again, what he wrote in condemnation of the African slave trade would have honored the utterances of John P. Hale, or pointed the eloquent paragraphs of Wendell Phillips.

Those who now (in 1892) are forwarding the grand public highway across Nicaragua for ocean ships will be delighted to review his project for a Nicaragua ship canal, and his reference to the benefit to be derived therefrom. Here are four pregnant words. "Private enterprise, properly protected."

Taylor's Panama railroad, in this message, sooner materialized, and the transit, though always inadequate, brought us nearer to California long before the Pacific railways made a closer connection. And surely the tariff paragraph can now hardly be excelled in wisdom: "Fixing the duties at rates high enough to afford substantial and sufficient encouragement to our industry, and at the same time so adjusted as to insure stability." What brought General Taylor the greatest political hostility and platform abuse was his recommendation to admit California, with a free constitution, which recommendation he soon followed by another of like import concerning New Mexico. Slaveholder though he was, he never for an instant seems to have considered his

Digitized by Google

own personal interest, immediate or remote. He asked in this regard but one question, namely, What conditions of admission does the Constitution require?

This message, though made as long ago as 1849, shows the coming prosperity of California, and inaugurates new surveys for highways and railways, and sets in motion numerous public improvements at the national charge, which have since, in one way or another, been adopted and carried on to completion. Here, too, we find a thoughtful projection of "the retired list" for disabled officers, and a good provision suggested for wounded, aged, and infirm soldiers, these things being put upon the ground of the increased efficiency of the army, and "justice from a grateful country."

Taylor found place for the extension of our postal system to new countries, and detected the great economy of reducing postage. He thought a letter might even be carried at a price as low as "five cents."

Washington and the District of Columbia felt his friendly hand. "Whatever can contribute to their prosperity" he strongly favored. As a last thought, he warmly deprecates any interference between the Executive, the Congress, and the courts. How much has always depended on independence there? You must not break one leg of a tripod, for the tripod will then topple over. And after a few choice words concerning the functions and responsibilities of a representative or an elector, who must ever look to the desires of his constituents, the general turns to remind Congress once more of our heritage, of the inestimable value of the American Union, and of the dependent happiness of "countless generations

Digitized by Google

to come." Then he declares himself as he might have done in battle: "I shall stand by the Union, and maintain it in its integrity to the full extent of the power conferred upon me by the Constitution."

This message, in its clearness, directness, and admirable wisdom, will live by the side of Washington's last address and Lincoln's characteristic proclamation of emancipation. It was the nucleus around which gathered and crystallized all the elements of Congress which were favorable first and always to the preservation of this nation; and its influence upon the whole country, upon men of all parties, can not be estimated.

The writer well remembers the visit of the Hungarian patriots to this continent. They had been exiled from their country after their unsuccessful attempt at revolution. A party, five in number, visited President Taylor, accompanied by the mayor of the city of Washington. They ventured to show themselves encouraged by a letter addressed to them by the President himself, in which he said: "I bespeak the sentiments of my countrymen in bidding you and your associates a cordial welcome to our soil, the natural asylum of the oppressed from every clime. We offer you protection, and a free participation in the benefits of our institutions."

The chosen chairman of the exiles read aloud the above letter. After he had finished, the President replied verbally as follows:

"It is with feelings of sincere pleasure that I welcome you and those around you to the capital of these United States. During your noble struggle for liberty no people have watched the progress of the Hungarian cause with more solicitude than those of

Digitized by Google

this Union. Wherever the standard of liberty is raised, *there* will be the aspirations of the American people. I regret exceedingly that Kossuth himself is not here. Although we Americans do not interfere in the struggles of foreign nations, still we would have been the first to acknowledge the independence of your people if the Hungarian cause had been successful."

In a newspaper published at Washington, called The Union, of date January 17, 1850, the following article appeared: "A Criticism on the President." "It seems that, with all his professed respect for the will of the people as expressed through their representatives, he [the President] takes no pains to conceal his passion when the representatives of the people call upon him for information relating not to his but to the people's business." This statement crept into a partisan journal. It was thoroughly refuted in the National Intelligencer the next day. There doubtless was a slight cause for the paragraph—some office-seeker had been rebuffed. Who can wonder that occasionally General Taylor became impatient under the unceasing pressure for office? He was certainly human!

The project of the Nicaragua Canal was discussed in the National Intelligencer in its issue of February 28, 1850. The friends of the enterprise were delighted to find in the President so firm a friend. About this time, on invitation, President Taylor visited Richmond, Virginia, to lay the corner-stone of the Washington monument. He went by vessel down the Potomac, and was met near its mouth by a committee comprising a large number

Digitized by Google

of the Virginia officials, with a special train to conduct him to Richmond. He received a generous ovation at the State capital, and in every place he passed through was displayed remarkable enthusiasm. In replying to the address of welcome which was delivered by the Speaker of the House of Virginia, and was very complimentary in tone, especially touching the Mexican War, the President spoke to this effect:

"The chief honor that you mention belongs to the patriotic volunteers and soldiers. I only had the honor to lead." Among other remarks that he made was the following modest disclaimer: "During my past life I have been devoted to my country, as I shall be in the future. It can not be expected that one whose time has been occupied in camp and field could properly address so enlightened an audience." Recalling his stanch patriotism, his popularity in Richmond was taken by the anti-slavery and Whig papers to be a good omen of the Union feeling of that section.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIII.

TAYLOR'S ADMINISTRATION.

The state of the country after Taylor's election—The testimony of Dr. Upham, a living witness—Northern sentiments—Southern fears and feeling—Conservative minds illustrated—President Taylor the "steadying center"—Hon. Herman White, of Cohoes, New York, shows the angry element in Congress—A Northern man and a Southern of sympathetic Union views meet—A "Fire-eater" and Edward Stanley—The last speech of John C. Calhoun—Pierce and Calhoun—How General Taylor met disloyal threats—The six Southern friends—Confidence in Daniel Webster and what he accomplished—Georgia's vote—How Union men turned away—The faults of Pierce's administration—Taylor loved the flag.

As a side-light thrown upon the political and social condition of our people at the national capital during the earlier part of Taylor's administration, the testimony of Dr. Upham, whose name has been previously mentioned, is here of value. The doctor has written a few books of a historic kind which bear evidence of his long and thorough study and careful research. His retentive memory and candor of statement entitle a contribution from him to much weight. With a view especially to secure to the readers of this biography a fair exhibit of the unusual social disturbances in Washington and neighboring cities, North and South, and their correctives during the very brief administration of General

Digitized by Google

Zachary Taylor, the substance of Dr. Upham's testimony is presented in this chapter. First he takes us to Philadelphia. This city was then virtually on the border line between the North and South. The doctor and his family, from New England, found themselves temporarily living there during the exciting times just after the election of 1848. At his boarding-place were many Northern acquaintances and several Southern people; so that, in the conversations which naturally arose, the topic nearest everybody's heart came up more or less day by day—conversations frank and general, frequently touching upon subjects of public interest, bringing out the different, often conflicting, opinions held in different sections of the country. The doctor himself was a "Webster Whig." As he was a man, even when young, of a conservative turn, he said he did all he could to promote peace between contending people, but he owns to having at one time, previous to this visit, been very much opposed to slavery itself, and to have spoken and written with much intenseness and depth of feeling on this fiery topic. Yet the cause of the perpetuity of the Union was ever uppermost in his mind and heart. While it was a moral discussion, that was one thing; but when it became a political one and demanded political action, that was quite another. "The political movements endangered the union of the States." It was his solemn conviction that this Union was bound up with the largest and most lasting interests of human kind; that it would become in the course of time a model of the federation of the different kingdoms of Europe so far as to provide for their mutual benefit; that the breaking up of the Union here, a division between

Digitized by Google

the South and the North, the formation of two governments, would make it necessary to draw a line of forts extending from north to south and east to west throughout the whole breadth of the land; a breaking up of the freedom of intercourse between the States, and possibly necessitate further subdivisions. It appeared to this young man wiser and better to leave the question of slavery to other influences than to those of political bodies, which were sure in time to bring about a clash of arms. Signs of this catastrophe were already visible, and most deeply affected the people, who, like Dr. Upham, took the old Whig view of political matters. The general state of feeling in the country at large may be gauged and judged of by this thinker's position. Like the wild throes of a revolution, it throbbed and boiled around the conservative Whigs as a steadying center. President Taylor, when he occupied the White House, and those who quietly stood by him from the North and from the South, afforded that "steadying center." A thrill of alarm and fear passed through the whole South where slavery then existed, at the startling language of the *bona-fide* Abolitionists in the North; at the same time there yet existed a strong hope that the conservative and patriotic sentiment of the free States would be forcible enough to restrain all adverse influences and preserve inviolate the promises of the Constitution. My conservative friend, like the man who studies mankind in himself, ponders over and illustrates the condition of society at large during Taylor's term of office, by that of his own Philadelphia boarding-place. He says: "Two ladies at our table—mother and daughter—came to me in the parlor one morning and told me that they were going

Digitized by Google

to leave. With the older lady I had spoken; I think not with the younger. When I expressed my regret at their going the young lady burst into tears. Her mother, of course, instantly proceeded to explain. She said that in Charleston, South Carolina, the people had become so alarmed by the excitement and apprehension felt there in consequence of things that were well known to me, that they had made up their minds to leave the country and the city, and to make their homes in Europe; and that the kindness of my tone and my appreciation of the situation of the state of things in the country generally, and especially in the South, had so surprised and touched them, that her daughter, on leaving us, was quite overcome by the remembrance of it. This opened my eyes to see more clearly than before something of the real state of the South, and the feeling of readiness to respond to any patriotic feeling on the part of the North." But after the departure of these acquaintances, my friend, during the winter, was greatly disturbed by new facts which indicated to him more and more the sensitive, morbid state of our people. His apprehension was intensified that a great crisis was approaching, and, indeed, near at hand; so he finally decided to go to Washington, and there make a careful study of the state of things for himself. He resided at the National Hotel. The first evening being very stormy, he naturally met no public man; but the next day Hon. Herman White, member of the House from Cohoes, New York, a personal friend, called upon him. Mr. White, a strong, hearty man, with a beaming face, was then a little past middle life. Handsomely dressed, replete with good cheer and kindness, he appeared to his young friend like "the

Digitized by Google

English gentleman of the olden times." Whom could he better consult as to the dangers of a great upheaval and civil strife?

To the first question concerning the state of the country Mr. White became serious and said "things had looked very bad indeed since this session began. There had been a good deal of danger of an outbreak on the floor of Congress, passion ran so high; Southern members have become so exasperated by the course of certain uncompromising parties from the North, that I have of late every day gone to the hall of the House with a pistol in my bosom." Ten years later than the period under consideration the efforts of our Government to strengthen the forts of Charleston harbor, as we all know, led to the firing on Fort Sumter. Then, at that early epoch, a similar increase of men sent by the War Department to enlarge the garrisons caused the Governor of South Carolina to send a formal inquiry to President Taylor to ascertain why additional troops had been sent to the forts on that coast. Taylor's prompt reply was: "The President is Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and for his disposal of its forts he is not required to give his reasons to any man."

One of the most memorable revolutionary events in the minds of the people of Charleston in the war of the Revolution was the defense of Fort Moultrie. The anniversary of that day was formerly always remembered on the island, where large gatherings of the people appeared, with good cheer and rejoicing. There was nothing of the kind during the year of which we speak. An order by the military commander of the fort forbade the landing of any boats

Digitized by Google

on that day, and, with cannon loaded and his men under arms, he waited all the day for whatever might happen. Fortunately, as in the spring of 1861, so in the spring of 1850, there was a most sagacious and prudent officer of the army in command in Charleston harbor, who at this juncture helped to allay the troubled waters. His friends in New England could hardly credit his testimony concerning the dangers that were so imminent. So little was the attitude and spirit of the South understood in those days, that our most radical "Free-Soilers" were often disposed to taunt the people of that section with insincerity and bravado. For example, even our most courteous Senator from New Hampshire, John P. Hale, is reported in a public speech to have said: "The South could not be kicked into a fight." It now, in the light of history, seems a most absurd statement; but such an impression was not uncommon in the North at that time. Men could not be made to believe till long afterward that civil war in numberless places was indeed brewing, and was certain to break forth sooner or later into a furious and terrible reality. The facts, however, known to our friend at the capital, who was carefully sounding the currents on all sides of him, conclusively prove that the upheaval that burst upon the nation even then as a surprise, came near to the surface—nearer than most Northern men dreamed—in 1850, eleven years before the rebellion.

Another conservative mind from the South—a man of high standing and patriotic impulse, who had come to Washington with the hope of doing something for the preservation of the peace which he believed, from his own environment, to be in peril—said to his

Digitized by Google

Northern companion and co-worker: "I see the deep interest that you take in ascertaining the real state of feeling in our Southern country, and in a few days I shall have some information to impart that may be of great interest and importance. In South Carolina there are lodges throughout the State associated together for political ends and aims, largely consisting of young men. The leaders of our southern section of country, desiring to test and to feel the pulse of the people, have brought about a meeting of representatives of these associations in the city of Charleston, and as soon as I have information of the result I will let you know." The result, as he declared a few weeks later, "had been most surprising. When they came together the feeling ran high. They were so ready for secession of the State itself at once, and for the taking up of arms, that it was thought dangerous for them to remain in session, and they were summarily sent home by the leaders who had called them together." The leaders found the pulse too dangerous; the feeling ran so high, that, while they knew they could rely upon the people of South Carolina for any action, they felt, however, that any too precipitate movement, to warrant a hope of final success, must be avoided. The *émeute* at Charleston or in South Carolina really hinged on a reported clash between the authorities of the State of Texas and the United States. In case of the use of force or of an actual collision, there was a well-laid plot in South Carolina to seize immediately the forts in Charleston harbor, and thus begin at once the civil war.

We may further illustrate the possibility of a social and political irruption by a conversation at the

Digitized by Google

National Hotel a little later between two Taylor Whigs, who both ardently loved the Union. "I see," said the Southerner to the Northerner, "that you, like myself, have been drawn to the city by a feeling common to us both, and of deep interest as to what has been done or what may come to pass." And this was true not of him alone, but of hosts of others. He went on to say: "The owning of slaves has not been the kind of property which was thought by myself and my family particularly desirable. We still hold to the ideas of Jefferson and of other patriots of Revolutionary times. The member from my district was elected as a conservative man, but he says passion has since run so high, and times have been so threatening, that I felt it my duty to try and strengthen him, fearing that he might be a little weak in the knees; and now I can tell you this, which is the point I have been aiming at: things may even now, by the efforts of patriotic men, North and South, be kept quiet; that is the only hope for a delay. If there should come about a clash, if a single Southern man be killed, it will be said at once by all the men of the South, 'There lies a man who died in the defense of ourselves and our property'; "and," he said, "this cry would sweep with it myself, my family, and my country." His views at that early time as to civil war were fully borne out by events which we know took place a few years later.

The following episode shows the temper of Congress during that memorable epoch. A little after this conversation, in the House of Representatives, Edward Stanley, of North Carolina—a man of charming presence, fine address, and personally very popular with all—was making one of his speeches in the

Digitized by Google

evening that was not more pleasing to Northern patriots than to men of the South; earnest, humorous, full of point and sallies of wit, in which he alluded to something which had been said by one of the "Fire-eaters." Criticising the speaker in terms parliamentary no doubt, he brought the man to his feet. Breaking in upon Mr. Stanley's speech, in the most angry and excited manner, he asked him in what sense he used those words. A hush fell that was awe-inspiring—a silence in the hall like that of death; to use a well-worn figure, "you might have heard a pin drop." It seemed a long time, though it was but an instant, before Mr. Stanley, with a courteous bow and a "smile that was child-like and bland," replied, "*In the Pickwickian sense!*" And the roll of laughter that went through the hall wafted away the danger of an instant attack, or of a duel in the near future. That there had been danger in the District of a clash of arms men on the floor of the House of Representatives had seen, and made record of the fact. That there was danger there and elsewhere of something of the kind, and that it was sought for and planned by certain public men in conspiracy at that time, that they might seize upon the capital and public property to the South, and have as President a Southern man, a planter from Louisiana; that they might then and there inaugurate a Southern republic, was apparent and certain; and we find the symptoms, in various ways and sundry forms, appearing in most of the journals of the day. But, before further speaking of that, it may be well here to recall a scene in the chamber of the Senate. It was virtually "the dying speech" of John C. Calhoun. Seated in his curia-chair with his cloak around him,

Digitized by Google

his eye undimmed and full of fire, he looked as noble as any senator in the best days of Rome, but he was too weak to stand, and lived after this only a few months. His speech was read for him by Mason, of Virginia, a man of fine presence and full, commanding tone, whose voice rang through the hall like a blast from a trumpet. Warning the North of what seemed to him almost inevitable, he said: "Let them not name the illustrious man whose bones lie below on the southern bank of the Potomac; we too have looked into his history, and find there nothing that countenances submission to wrong." Our young Northern friend, who was present, exclaims: "Such was the impression made on my mind by that last speech of Calhoun, that I felt certain that the irrepressible conflict between the North and the South must be decided on fields of battle, as I did eleven years later, when I saw the mustering of armed men throughout the length and breadth of our land."

Another incident in this connection is of interest. Franklin Pierce, of New Hampshire, in a speech in the House of Representatives, no doubt with honest intentions and to quiet the alarm that was working so deeply in the Southern mind and heart, stated that there were no abolitionists whatever known to him in the district he had the honor to represent. Thereupon, from his place in the Senate, Mr. Calhoun, who ever kept himself thoroughly well informed of all that was taking place in all parts of the country, read from a newspaper a full account of a meeting of avowed abolitionists in Mr. Pierce's own district, and the resolutions which they passed. Franklin Pierce, a man of undeniable bravery, and who in the Mexican War had been military Governor of the City

Digitized by Google

of Mexico, was then quite young, and, with something of the fire and impetuosity of youth, took a course hardly paralleled in parliamentary history. He came over into the chamber of the Senate, where he had no right to be heard. Being, however, permitted there to speak, he said, if the truth of anything uttered by him in the hall of Representatives was doubted in the Senate, he had a right to claim from any such person the satisfaction due to him as a gentleman. Mr. Calhoun was fond of young men, and they were fond of him. Pierce, by his antecedents and by his character, was a favorite of his, and he at once, in a most complimentary, courteous, and satisfactory manner, disclaimed the thought of making any such impression as those words implied, stating that he read the proceedings of that meeting merely for the purpose of showing how and in what an unexpected manner, even to those nearest to it, the fire which was threatening the South was already kindling in the North.

It was about this time, when the political ferment was excessively annoying to all lovers of the Union, that certain representatives of the Southern party in Congress—probably enough to be called a delegation from the same—went to President Zachary Taylor, claiming him as a planter from Louisiana and a citizen of the South, and asked to lay before him their plan—viz., by force of arms to seize upon the Capitol and other public buildings at Washington, and then and there in the District of Columbia to inaugurate a Southern republic—which last was actually done years later in the capitol at Richmond. Of course such an outbreak would have been followed by the local opposition of loyal men and the resistance of

Digitized by Google

the Northern members of Congress, who were to have been dispossessed of their seats in the Capitol. The conspirators were wholly mistaken in the man then placed at the head of affairs! General Taylor was not then, and never had been, at any period of his life, in sympathy with the extreme pro-slavery men. In thought and feeling he was fully in sentiment with Washington, Jefferson, and other patriots of the Revolutionary War, and especially with Henry Clay. He looked forward to the time when slavery might cease throughout the entire republic. General Taylor was a man of deeds, not of words; but in his reply to those men his words were equivalent to deeds of greatest consequence to his country, and proved him to have been one of the few men in our history who were really indispensable. General Taylor told the delegation that, if there was any outbreak or disturbance of the public peace, he himself would put it down at the head of volunteers—yes, of volunteers from the South. Nobler words than his at that epoch have seldom been used by any man; and behind them was the full force of the firm character which he had fully shown on hard-contested fields of battle. The effect of these words was felt in producing the comparative quietude that ensued during that session of Congress. Reports of this memorable interview found their way also into the journals of the time. It was no secret. It does not rest upon the testimony of any one individual. But some of the partisan journals suppressed those telling words, "by volunteers from the South"—words which then had such great power over the minds of those who heard and those who read them.

Digitized by Google

It is pleasant to introduce here some direct testimony from a prominent statesman: "My plantation in Louisiana nearly joins that of General Taylor, who was my near neighbor. I saw him often during many years, and perhaps I am as well acquainted with his real sentiments as any man can well be. I know from my intercourse with him that he is not at heart in favor of slavery, neither am I myself." He added: "If I were not sure of his sentiments I would not vote for him."

As the moving branch or trembling leaf shows the direction of the wind, so a few words from a common man in society often is the best indication of the trend of events. The book-keeper of the National Hotel, watching the state of affairs as exhibited to him from day to day, said to our conservative friend: "Sir, you may think that these threats of war are mere talk, and that there is nothing of substance behind them. The apprehension of immediate trouble has abated a good deal. You would not think it, but I belong to one of the militia companies of the District. We soldiers think more than I can tell about the state of things. We have come together at different times and places, and we talk the matter over, and we all have come to this conclusion—that we would do just what Zach. Taylor told us to do!" The military of the District would have followed Zachary Taylor and obeyed his commands to a man; and no doubt Taylor relied upon the military of the District and of Baltimore to do whatever needed to be done in the outset, let the emergency be what it might. Thus at that moment the affair, as we have seen, was brought under control for a time. But here, in

Digitized by Google

justice to another great man—Daniel Webster—whose influence at that time has probably never been fully understood by his countrymen, let us state some facts which had a marked effect upon the course of human events. There were at that time in the Senate of the United States six men from the South who had been more conservative and probably of really greater influence than the fire-eating men then in conspiracy plotting the dissolution of the Union among the Representatives. One Saturday night one of these six was alone in his room, his mind filled with the questions of the day, of what had better come or what had to be done. There was a rap at his door, and another of the six came into that room; soon afterward a third rap at the door, and there was yet another, and soon all the six were together. A common feeling, without any concert of action, had led to this meeting at this late hour of the night; and knowing each other, and the position they held on the questions that were in each of their minds, the conference was a solemn and startling one. Apparently somewhat to the surprise of the rest, the first speaker said there was nothing left to them but to fight. The second followed in the same tone and to the same effect. So did the third, and the fourth, and the fifth, the solemnity deepening with each successive speaker. The sixth and last spoke to this effect: "Thus far we have heard at this session and from the Northern country generally, for the most part, the voice only of the excited and abolitionized North. I believe that there is yet, though silent, a patriotic party at the North who will respect our constitutional rights. If there be, Mr.

Digitized by Google

Webster will utter the sentiments of that party. He is soon to speak in his place in the Senate, and if he scorns us we must fight." Those men deferred to this wise and timely counsel. That week Mr. Webster did speak. The tone of his argument—and in his whole life there were few that were more important—when he began, and throughout his speech, was kindly, conciliatory, and appreciative of what had been done by the South in securing the freedom of the vast domain of the Northwest. It was widely different from the tone of those who seemed to all Southern men and women ready and more than willing to let loose upon them the fury of an insurrection which must inaugurate a most relentless and cruel war. Then, going on to the question of slavery and freedom which had arisen to such an alarming height between the North and the South, he urged that, in the Providence of God and by the sudden calling of the people to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and by the act of that people, the actions of those settlers, practically the great question at issue had been settled forever, so far as all that vast territory was concerned, in favor of freedom. The only lands remaining in dispute were the high and rugged hills of New Mexico, and the only question—the only practical question, so far as territory was concerned—remaining unsettled between conflicting sections of the Union, was the ridge where slavery could not go. As a friend to the feelings of a section of the country already greatly alarmed and distressed in view of their safety and interests, as a patriot and statesman, it is plain that Mr. Webster could take no other course than that he did when he used those sublime words:

Digitized by Google

"I would not take pains uselessly to re-enact the will of God." Mr. Webster's conciliatory, patriotic, and fearless tone was offensive to the over-zealous, who could neither understand his wisdom nor appreciate his motives; and such was the depth of indignation and the power of misrepresentation on their part, that for one of the noblest actions of his life he was denounced as a traitor to freedom; and notwithstanding his great services, long continued to the country, in his native State and in Boston, Faneuil Hall was closed against him, and its noblest citizen was not permitted to there speak in his own defense. On the other hand, the effect upon the South for a little while was hardly less than marvelous. For weeks after, Webster's speech was read by the people of South Carolina; they would have voted for Webster by acclamation for President; but, after a few months had passed, and they had thought the matter over more calmly and fully, they saw that in nothing had Mr. Webster conceded any principle that he had ever advocated before, or deviated a hair from his life-long record. At that moment the consequence of the speech in great measure was to defer the action of the South. But there was, of course, no permanent prevention, and so the irrepressible conflict still went on till the issue was joined on the fields of battle.

Under the array of facts that have here been presented by going back to those almost forgotten days in our history which were never well understood at the North, all men can now see that, had the conflict been ten years earlier than it was, the North, which in 1861 was everywhere illy prepared for it, would have been far less prepared, and the

Digitized by Google

South better. In evidence of this may be stated a noticeable fact bearing upon the question. Few are those who now remember, or perhaps ever knew, that in those days spoken of, the Legislature of the great State of Georgia voted to submit to the people of that State the question whether it should remain in the Union. Then it was that, by the untiring exertions of a man whose services to his country at that time should not be forgotten, not even in view of the record he made afterward, Howell Cobb canvassed the State from its southern to its northern boundary, and was largely instrumental, by his personal effort, in securing the somewhat small majority of 18,000 in a popular vote by which Georgia then decided to remain in the Union. In comparing all these facts and reflecting upon them, no one can fail to see how large a debt of gratitude the country owes to General Taylor, and that with him in this meed of praise and noble effort should be joined forever the name of Webster. There ever were, even during the civil war, Union men—devoted Union men—in the Southern States. Of these, in the early days that have been spoken of, Cobb of Georgia, Clements of Alabama, and Foot of Mississippi, were the most conspicuous; but, unfortunately, in the administration of Franklin Pierce the whole patronage of the Government was wielded by Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, and those who joined him in favor of men violent for the South, utterly ignoring the past high services and claims of such men as those just named.

An incident may serve to illustrate this statement. The election of Franklin Pierce was measurably satisfactory to the Union sentiment of the North. During his canvass Union Northerners vouched for

Digitized by Google

his Union sentiments, especially to the few Union men of the city of Charleston, South Carolina. Yet a Union man who was a Democrat had been appointed by a Whig President collector of the port of Charleston because he was a Union man. This man was removed from his post as collector, and the man was put in his place who had led an assault upon the house of the former because of his Union principles. Such was the new policy after the election. The consequences of discouraging the pronounced Union men on the part of those who controlled the Government of the United States were disastrous in the extreme. Old leaders—Union men of the South—feeling themselves deserted by the Administration, did, as a matter of fact, fall under the influences prevailing in their own State; and, like new converts to any plausible faith, men who had been hitherto strong Union Whigs and Union Democrats strove in the coming decade to outdo the advocates of nullification and secession. General Taylor bore his part firmly, steadily, and conscientiously throughout this period of hope and fear, and for no instance could any influence whatever make him swerve one hair's breadth in the fulfillment of his loyal promises, and in the strict adherence to the full meaning of his oath of office. Zachary Taylor loved the old flag which he had followed for over half a century; yes, he greatly loved the whole country which it emblemized.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSING SCENES.

Concluding remarks—White House routine—Mrs. Bliss at the White House—Some gentle criticisms—The Fourth of July—The laying of the corner-stone of Washington's monument—President Taylor's part—The heat of the day—The imprudences of the President—His sudden sickness—The general alarm—The reports *pro* and *con*—The last scene, and the last words of President Taylor—Millard Fillmore, the Vice-President—What he did—The funeral ceremonies—The testimony of Thomas H. Benton, Daniel Webster, and other public men—All honor to the American soldier!

THROUGH the winter and spring of 1850 there was at the White House the usual succession of morning visits, business engagements, cabinet meetings, applications for office, afternoon and evening receptions, varied here and there by public dinners to the Supreme Court, the members of the diplomatic corps, to Senators and Representatives, and officers of the army and navy. General Taylor, who was accustomed to the regularity of army life, soon fell into the routine of duties both public and private, and became in the President's house, as he was at the head of an army in the field, master of the situation. With his daughter, Mrs. Bliss, and the friends she gathered about her to aid him, all matters touching public and social etiquette were arranged not only to his gratification, but were beginning to receive the expressed com-

Digitized by Google

mendations of the press of the country, and of society generally. It takes a little time for the members of any family, whatever their experience or wherever they may be rated in the social scale, to make the essential adjustments and please those who make it a business to sit in Washington as correspondents, and detail all the peculiarities or idiosyncrasies as well as the imputed virtues of the new incumbents of the President's mansion.

A writer inspecting his conduct at this time remarks: "General Taylor seems at last to begin to understand his duties, and, knowing them, he has commenced their performance with the same zeal and intelligence that marked his military career." The summer came; Congress was still in session. On the seventy-fourth anniversary of our national independence—the 4th of July, 1850—Washington saw an unusual celebration. It was the time when the corner-stone of the great monument to George Washington was laid. Senator Foot, of Mississippi, was to be the orator of the day. Those who had the matter in charge invited General Taylor to ride in the procession. The sun of July was extremely hot. General Taylor gladly participated in these ceremonies. The procession was a long one, and passed along several streets before reaching the grounds selected for the monument. The heat affected him so much, that, when he left his carriage to take a seat upon the stand prepared for him, he complained of some giddiness and headache. He declared that the oppressive heat was worse than in either Florida or Mexico.

There was an immense crowd, and the formal ceremonies were quite prolonged. In spite of his sudden disabilities, General Taylor gave special at-

Digitized by Google

tention to the ornate address of Senator Foot. Speaking of the modesty of General Washington, and his earnest desire to flee as soon as possible from the irksomeness of public life, and of his reluctance to serve a second term, the orator showed how his friends placed the matter before him as an urgent public duty. One who was present wrote to a Northern paper that General Taylor, listening to these periods, was evidently deeply meditating upon what he would do if a second term should be tendered him. Perhaps, however, Taylor was thinking how much he disliked the worry of the new details that daily had devolved upon him, and how glad he should be when the time came to put off the burdens of office and return to his home in Louisiana. Certainly, General Taylor would not have been likely, judging by the remarks that he let fall, to be already plotting for a re-election. An impartial biographer would now feel sure that he would, unless constrained by some unforeseen pressure, have formally declined to stand for a second term. Notwithstanding the heat, the dust, and the fatigues of the occasion, the President appeared to have enjoyed everything connected with the celebration of this event.

It is only within a few years that the grand Washington Monument has been brought to completion. It was even necessary, years later, to dig deeply and relay the foundations with great care and expense. Every American rejoices to look upon it now. It is a lofty and beautiful structure, and it stands there at the capital to remind one always of the first great leader and President; and it is indeed a pleasure to remind ourselves that of all others in the line of Washington's successors, General Zachary Taylor,

Digitized by Google

with high qualities so much like his, laid the corner-stone of his monument, and, further, that it was the last public act of Taylor's own honorable life.

During the ceremonies of this great and notable occasion the President experienced an unusual thirst, and, as was his habit, he endeavored to allay the feverish feeling by large draughts of cold water. With a few companions, as soon as the benediction was pronounced he walked slowly around the monument, and then over the grounds, while the sun, in a cloudless sky, poured its direct rays upon him. But finally, after due respect had been shown to the memorial and its environment, he returned to his carriage and drove to the President's mansion. His next unpleasant feeling was that of extreme hunger. Probably he had the usual fever or biliousness resulting from the prolonged heat and the too abundant exercise and its influence. As soon as he reached home he partook freely of refreshments, eating berries and cherries more abundantly than anything else. The troublesome thirst not being allayed by several glasses of water, he had himself furnished with iced milk, which he also partook of freely. At the usual hour, probably about six o'clock, he sat down to dinner; and at this meal he seemed to have an abnormal appetite for the fruit, eating cherries again. The family physician, sitting with him, warned him against this evident imprudence, as he knew that the general was already not at all well.

It was perhaps an hour after dinner when he became violently ill. The first really dangerous symptoms were painful cramps, which were soon followed by a severe attack of cholera morbus. The doctor present advised the usual remedies, but the

Digitized by Google

general was loath to take them, as he believed one so strong as himself could do without medicine. He declared his attack, which he was sure resulted from eating too much fruit, would soon pass away. Even his family physician believed at first that his strong constitution and superb physique would overcome the temporary disability.

But by eleven o'clock that night the terrible pain had increased, and the cholera morbus would not yield to treatment. His family, including the physician, were already full of alarm as to the results unless some extraordinary remedy could be made to produce a reaction. The alarm of the household soon spread to the streets, to the city, and to the nation: "President Taylor is dangerously ill!" Substantially the same symptoms, only abating at intervals, continued up to the close of that long-to-be-remembered 6th of July. Then Dr. Weatherspoon, the trusted family physician, invited Drs. Coolidge and Hall, of Washington, for consultation; these three sent for another eminent practitioner, Dr. Wood, of Baltimore.

As these able men gathered about the bed and took in the situation they shook their heads to each other, though they spoke hopefully to the family; for already this attack, very like Asiatic cholera, had reduced the strong man to a state of great debility and weakness. Very soon, however, the symptoms appeared more favorable. The doctors seemed to be getting the mastery of the disease. But, as was natural, a remittent fever with typhoidal threatenings made its appearance. While they found in their patient scarcely strength enough to resist the first attack, this second, less virulent but more insidi-

Digitized by Google

ous, everybody saw had at its beginning put his life in imminent peril.

It was not as in days more recent, when President Garfield after his desperate wounding lay at the White House—when the news was communicated by hourly bulletins to every part of the nation, and every day to every part of the civilized world; still there was an unusual circulation and a great public manifestation of sympathy. Crowds of people were waiting outside to catch the first news of the President's condition. The messages sent from the sick-room, however, never seemed to give much relief. As is always the case, the political combats were hushed, and all began to remember the long, grand service of the old general, and to say something in his favor. It is a good thing that from the days of Rome till now it is customary to hush the voice of accusation and hostility in the presence of the dying and the dead. It is said that, in those days of great and intense anxiety on the part of the people who crowded the streets and avenues of the city, a special orderly was stationed in front of the White House to hear the applications for news and receive the messages of friends and convey tidings as best he could to those who inquired after the suffering President. Over and over during the 8th the messenger said: "I am sorry to say that the President is no better!" Then the inquirer, and those who were bending their heads to catch his words, would turn sorrowfully away, their places to be immediately filled by other waiting friends. The 9th of that hot July brought no relief; all the morning there was a general feeling of gloom pervading all classes. The

Digitized by Google

messages that broke the monotony among the outside watchers gave but a momentary change. Yet once, before noon, a rumor was started, and gained extensive credence, that the President was better, and there was everywhere quite a cheerful reaction. At one o'clock another rumor came, and spread through the city: "President Taylor is dead!" This false report brought to the out-door messenger an official statement that the President still lived; that he had taken a favorable turn, and certainly the physicians did not look for his speedy decease.

What a change came over the sympathizing people! They cheered, they shouted. They ran to the churches and rang the bells, and each accosted his neighbor, "Glad to hear the good news; the general is out of danger." As the ball in fresh snow gathers volume as it rolls along, so the doctor's official bulletin grew, till thousands believed that the crisis had passed, and that the people's favorite President was happily convalescent. Still the concourse around the mansion only increased, for there were counter-rumors, and by seven o'clock at evening word came from within: "The President is worse; he is dying." There were finally gathered around him his medical men before mentioned, his family, consisting of his beloved wife, Colonel and Mrs. Bliss (his daughter), his brother, Colonel Taylor and family, General Jefferson Davis and family. The Vice-President, Millard Fillmore, with several Congressmen, members of both Houses, a few foreign ministers, all the Cabinet, and a number of close personal friends, were also there. At a little after ten o'clock the doctors whispered that he would soon breathe his

Digitized by Google

last. They then stepped back to let the family and the clergyman approach the bedside.

Mrs. Taylor, before entering the room, could not believe that he was dying, yet in her intense anxiety two or three times she fainted. The minister led in a quiet prayer for essential spiritual strength to the sufferer while he was treading the dark valley now so heavy with shadows. "After the prayer," writes a journalist, "he seemed refreshed, and called for a glass of water. It was given him, and he drank sparingly." He asked Dr. Weatherspoon how long he should last. "I hope for many years, but"—after a pause the honest doctor said, "I fear not many hours." "I know it," the general promptly answered, then wished for a word with his family. Those present never could forget that interview. The wife and mother fell prostrate at his bedside, and his children sobbed aloud. Of course, last words are not all important, yet men like to record them.

Some one said, "Are you comfortable, general?"

"Very," he answered, "but the storm, in passing, has swept away the trunk."

Again he spoke: "I am about to die. I expect the summons very soon. I have endeavored to discharge all my official duties faithfully. I regret nothing, but am sorry that I am about to leave my friends." These were the last words of Zachary Taylor. He turned his dying face toward his sobbing wife and seemingly tried to speak, and so breathed his last.

General Taylor's Cabinet without delay waited upon the Vice-President, Mr. Fillmore, and made to him—what he already knew—the announcement of

Digitized by Google

the President's death. He immediately, as he was in duty bound, entered upon the duties of the office. On the morrow, the 10th of July, he again stood in his place in front of the Senate, and officially spoke the sad words of bereavement. As then arranged, the Chief-Justice, at noon of that day, in the presence of both Houses of Congress, administered to him (Millard Fillmore) the oath which is prescribed for the President of the United States, and he entered sadly but bravely upon the new duties which were so suddenly devolved upon him.

A good President is a blessing to these States; but in case of sudden death it is for a time an extremely difficult place to fill. The virtues of the departed are uppermost in men's minds, and at this juncture they usually find fault with the new incumbent. As Commander of the Army and Navy, President Fillmore published a general order which was beautifully true of the deceased, and will ever do honor to himself as General Taylor's successor. It shows for itself: "The President of the United States, with profound sorrow, announces to the army and navy and marine corps the death of Zachary Taylor, late President of the United States. He died at the Executive mansion on the night of the 9th instant, at half-past ten o'clock. His last public appearance was while participating in the ceremonies of our national anniversary, at the base of the monument now rearing to the memory of Washington. His last official act was to affix his signature to the Convention recently concluded between the United States and Great Britain. The vigor of a constitution strong by nature, and confirmed by active and temperate habits, had in later years become impaired by the

Digitized by Google

arduous toils and exposures of his military life. Solely engrossed in maintaining the honor and advancing the glory of his country, in a career of forty years in the army of the United States he rendered himself signal and illustrious. An unbroken current of success and victory, terminated by an achievement unsurpassed in our annals, left nothing to be accomplished for his military fame. His conduct and courage gave him this career of unexampled fortune, and, with the crowning virtues of moderation and humanity under all circumstances, and especially in the moment of victory, revealed to his countrymen those great and good qualities which induced them, unsolicited, to call him from his high military command to the highest civil office of honor and trust in the republic; not that he desired to be first, but that he was felt to be worthiest. The simplicity of his character, the singleness of his purpose, the elevation and patriotism of his principles, his moral courage, his justice, magnanimity, and benevolence, his wisdom, moderation, and power of command, while they have endeared him to the heart of the nation, add to the deep sense of the national calamity in the loss of a Chief Magistrate whom death itself could not appall in the consciousness of '*having always done his duty.*'

"The officers of the army and of the navy and marine corps will, as a manifestation of their respect for the exalted character and eminent public services of the illustrious dead, and of their sense of the calamity the country has sustained by this afflicting dispensation of Providence, wear crape on the left arm and upon the hilt of the sword for six months. It is further directed that funeral honors be paid at each of the military posts, according to

Digitized by Google

the general regulations, at navy yards, and on board all the public vessels in commission, by firing thirty minute-guns, commencing at meridian on the day after the receipt of this order, and by wearing their flags at half-mast."

On the following Saturday, July 13th, Rev. Dr. Pyne, of the Episcopal Church, conducted the funeral services at the President's mansion. His sermon was a most touching tribute to the memory of a good man. The family, though not in the room with the casket, were within hearing. The procession along the avenue was over a mile in extent, and multitudes waited at the cemetery at Capitol Hill. An unusual circumstance was the manner in which the artillery fired their minute-guns while the remains were passing from the White House to the tomb. The salute began in front of St. John's Church, was taken up by a detachment near the City Hall, and continued by another at the Capitol. The final volley was given at the vault—a temporary resting place—for, a few months after the ceremonies, General Taylor's immediate friends and relatives removed his remains, to be deposited not far from the old homestead at Louisville, Ky. The entire route was thronged with the people who were desirous to show respect to his heroic memory, and there were appropriate ceremonies in many halting and resting places during the long, sad journey.

The books of records contain many eulogies upon our hero. Meetings were everywhere held, and party lines were for a time ignored, as in the presence of a great calamity; and a love whose existence a few months before General Taylor would like to have known, was now everywhere manifested. Even

Digitized by Google

Benton, who was to have been the Lieutenant-General, with a view, under President Polk, to outrank this veteran warrior, said in Congress: "His [General Taylor's] brief career showed no deficiency of political wisdom for want of political training. He came into the administration at a time of great difficulty, and acted up to the emergency of his position. . . . His death was a public calamity. No man could have been more devoted to the Union or more opposed to slavery agitation; and his position as a Southern man and a slave-holder, his military reputation, and his election by a majority of the people and of the States, would have given him a power in the settlement of these questions which no President without these qualifications could have possessed. In the political division he classed with the Whig party, but his administration, as far as it went, was applauded by the Democracy, and promised to be so to the end of his official term."

And Daniel Webster, who once thought that such a nomination as that of Zachary Taylor ought not to have been made, had many strong and true words to speak of the departed: "I believe he was especially regarded as a firm and a mild man in the exercise of authority; and I have observed more than once, in this and other popular governments, that the prevalent motive of the masses of mankind for conferring high honors upon individuals is a confidence in their mildness, their paternal, protecting, prudent, and safe character. . . . I suppose that no case ever happened, in the very best days of the Roman republic, when a man found himself clothed with the highest authority in the state, under circumstances more repelling all suspicion of personal

Digitized by Google

application, of pursuing any crooked path in politics, or of having been actuated by sinister views and purposes, than in the case of this worthy and eminent and distinguished and good man."

If his political rivals and political opponents spoke thus of General Taylor, we can imagine something of the beauty and strength of the words of approbation and praise that fell from the lips of his ardent friends. It seemed, then, that he was cut off in the midst of his usefulness, and that his work was left incomplete. But it does not appear so now to the eyes of a new generation. By this man's leadership, with the aid of those who had to co-operate with him, the nation was enlarged, and yet preserved from a meditated disruption. The great conflict which was to afflict, winnow, and purify the whole people was postponed, as we have seen, through Taylor's integrity, ability, firmness, and unswerving patriotism, for more than a decade. Then, when he became President, had the rebellion come and he been leading it, the republic would probably have perished, for no united sufficient force could at that time have been organized and put into the field. The Lord be praised that he was incorruptible; that he was a generous friend of the American Union! All honor, under a guiding Providence, to the memory of the genuine American nobleman, ZACHARY TAYLOR!

Digitized by Google

INDEX.

Abercrombie, Major John J., 164.
Agua Nueva, the, 300.
Aguirre, José Maria de, 194, 211, 219, 221.
Allen, Captain George W., 62, 67, 108.
Alligator, 58, 60.
Allison, J. S., 306.
Ampudia, General Pedro de, 97, 153, 174, 177, 182, 245, 253.
Andrade, Colonel D. Miguel, 244, 248.
Andrews, Captain George, 68.
Arista, General Mariano, 87, 112, 114, 126, 130.
Atchison, David R., 316.
Atkins, General Henry, 45.
Aviaka (Sam Jones), 60.
Ayres, Elisha, 19.

Babbitt, Lieutenant Edwin Burr, 70.
Backus, Captain Electus, 165.
Ballarta, Captain, 254, 258.
Bancroft, Hon. George, 85.
Barbour, Captain P. N., 121.
Barron, Commodore James, 30.
Baton Rouge, 7, 77, 78.
Belknap, Colonel William G., 106, 275.
Bell, Hon. John, 326.
Benton, Thomas H., 325, 366, 377.
Bissell, Colonel William H., 255.
Black Hawk, 46, 47, 48.
Blaine, Hon. James G., 81, 326.
Blake, Lieutenant Jacob E., 107, 127.
Blakey, Lieutenant, 68.
Blanchard, Captain Albert G., 155.
Blanco, Colonel D. Santiago, 248, 257.
Bliss, Mrs. Bettie, 300, 314, 324, 366.
Bliss, Colonel William W. S., 324.
Blucher, Field Marshal, 260.
Bowles, Colonel William A., 256.
Bragg, Captain Braxton, 104, 158, 175, 251, 278.
Brant, Major Joshua B., 70.
Brent, Lieutenant Thomas Lee, 278.

Digitized by Google

Brook, Lieutenant Francis J., 71.
Brown, Captain Jacob, 116, 123.
Bryan, Lieutenant Francis Theodore, 278.
Buchanan, Captain Robert C., 121.
Buchanan, Hon. James, 316.
Buena Vista, Battle of, 3, 234.
Burbank, Lieutenant John G., 122.
Burr, Colonel Aaron, 22.
Butler, General E. G. W., 274.
Butler, General William O., 157, 167, 235, 312.

Calhoun, Hon. John C., 303, 325, 348, 356.
Camargo, movement on, 144.
Campbell, Colonel W. B., 166.
Carr, George, 8.
Cass, Lewis, 312, 325.
Center, Lieutenant John P., 63, 72.
Chadbourn, Lieutenant Thomas L., 122.
Chase, Hon. Salmon P., 326.
Chevalie, Major Michael H., 160.
Childs, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas, 68, 108, 111, 155, 170.
Churchill, Lieutenant William H., 108.
Clark, Dr. Lemuel B., 36.
Clay, Henry, 79, 274, 283, 296, 304, 312, 325, 259.
Clay, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry, Jr., 267, 276.
Clayton, John M., 323.
Clemens, Jeremiah, 364.
Clifford, Nathan, 326.
Clinch, General D. L., 50.
Coahuila, Governor of, 223.
Cobb, Howell, 364.
Cochrane, Lieutenant Richard E., 122.
Cohua, John, 61.
Collamer, Jacob, 326.
Conde, General Garcia, 167.
Conner, Commodore David, 126, 129.
Conner, Captain John H., 256.
Conrad, Robert Taylor, 26.
Cooke, Dr. (Missouri Volunteers), 70.
Coolidge, Dr. (of Baltimore), 370.
Coronation Chamber, the, 148.
Corpus Christi, 3, 85, 87, 88.
Corwin, Thomas, 326.
Couch, Lieutenant Darius Nash, 278.
Cram, Captain Thomas J., 91, 92.
Crane, Lieutenant-Colonel Ichabod B., 53.
Crawford, George W., 323.
Crittenden, Thomas L., 292.
Crosman, Captain George H., 68.
Cross, Colonel Trueman, 100.
Curd, Captain Thomas J., 69.

Dade, Major Francis L., 49.
Dallas, George M., 316.
Davenport, Lieutenant-Colonel William, 52, 66.
David, King, 127.
Davis, Colonel Jefferson, 166, 175, 254, 274, 325, 364.

Digitized by Google

Diaz, General Porfirio, 12.
Dobbins, Lieutenant Stephen D., 122.
Donaldson, Lieutenant James Lowry, 268, 278.
Donelson, Hon. Andrew J., 84.
Donniphan, Colonel Alexander M., 142.
Douglass, Hon. Stephen A., 326.
Duncan, Captain James, 106, 111, 121, 155, 159, 176.

El-ska-wa-ta-wa, the Prophet, 27.
Engineer Corps, 172.
Everglades of Florida, 48.
Ewing, Hon. Thomas, 323.

Fillmore, Hon. Millard, 313, 366, 372.
Flanagan, Lieutenant, 68.
Florida, war in, 48.
Foote, Hon. Henry S., 364.
Foster, Lieutenant-Colonel William S., 63, 67.
Foster, Captain James F., 93.
Fort Frazer, 66.
Fowler, Lieutenant S. H., 122.
Fremont, General John C., 142.
French, Lieutenant Samuel Gibbs, 278.
Fry, James Reese, 26, 46, 113, 122.

Gaines, General Edmund P., 69, 127, 143, 285.
Galana, General Garza, 290.
Garfield, Hon. James A., 371.
Garland, Lieutenant-Colonel John, 133, 138.
Gates, Lieutenant C. R., 122.
Gentry, Colonel Richard, 57, 68, 71.
Gillam, Captain William, 68.
Gorman, Major W. A., 251.
Graham, Major John, 67.
Grant, General U. S., 4, 43, 154, 273, 282.
Greeley, Horace, 314.
Griffin, Lieutenant George H., 69.
Gordon, Captain William, 30.

Hale, Hon. John P., 326, 343, 353.
Hall, Dr. (of Washington), 370
Hamer, General Thomas L., 167.
Hamlin, Hon. Hannibal, 326.
Hannah, Dr. (Missouri Volunteers), 70.
Hardee, Captain William J., 103, 126.
Hardin, Colonel John J., 243, 270, 276, 283.
Harney, Colonel William Selby, 74.
Harrison, Lieutenant Joseph P., 70.
Harrison, Captain William H. 23, 27.
Hase, Lieutenant John F., 69.
Hays, Colonel John G., 155, 171.
Hays, Lieutenant William, 121.
Henderson, General James P., 151, 179.
Hill, Captain James M., 69, 128.
Holloway, Mrs. L. C., 76, 324.
Hooe, Captain A. S., 122.

Digitized by Google

Hooper, Lieutenant John L., 67.
Hopkins, General Timothy, 39.
Howard, Lieutenant Guy, 290.
Howard, General Oliver Otis, 7.
Houston, Hon. Samuel, 80.

Indian Prophet, the, 27, 31.
Inge, Lieutenant Z. M. P., 121.
Iron Duke, the, 148.

Jackson, General Andrew, 326.
Jefferson, Hon. Thomas, 25, 355.
Jesup, General Thomas S., 50, 69.
Johnson, L. M., 290.
Johnson, Reverdy, 316.
Johnston, General J. E., 182.
Jones, President Anson, 84.
Jones, General Roger, 72.
Jordan, Lieutenant Charles D., 122.
Jumper, 57.
Juvera, General D. Julian, 244, 248, 258.

Kane, Lieutenant Elias Kent, 103.
Kearney, General Stephen W., 142.
Keokuk, Indian chief, 46.
Ker, Captain Crogan, 102, 112, 116, 121.
Kerr, Colonel Crosman, 53.
Kilburn, General C. L., 11, 262, 278.
King, Colonel William, 43.
Kingsbury, Lieutenant Charles P.. 250, 264.
Kossuth, Louis, 346.

Lake Okeechobee, 47.
La Motte, Captain Joseph H., 165.
Lane, General Joseph, 251, 259.
La Vega, General De, 120, 127.
Lear, Major William W., 164.
Lincoln, Abraham, 4, 326, 345.
Lincoln, Captain George, 276, 283.
Lincoln, Governor Levi, 274, 284.
Lano, Señor Manuel M., 182.
Lojero, General Emiliano, 138.
Lombardini, General D. Manuel Mara, 245, 258.
Lossing, Benson J., 76.
Lo Valde, Jesus, 290.
Luther, Lieutenant Roland A., 111.

Mackall, Lieutenant William W., 119, 149, 155, 159, 176.
Maclay, Lieutenant Robert P., 122.
Macomb, General Alexander, 74.
Madison, Hon. James, 25.
Madre Mountains, 241.
Majia, General D. Francisco, 96, 251.
Mansfield, Edward D., 228.
Mansfield, Major J. K. F., 154, 158, 166.
Marcy, William L., 83, 142, 203, 209, 224, 284, 316.
Marshall, Colonel Humphrey, 240, 251, 274.
Martin, Lieutenant James Green, 176.

Digitized by Google

Mason, Lieutenant George T., 103.
Mason, Hon. James M., 326, 357.
May, Captain Charles A., 106, 120, 157, 239, 254, 278.
Mayer, Brantz, 298.
McCall, Captain George A., 116, 119, 120.
McClellan, General George B., 244.
McClure, Lieutenant James, 70.
McCulloch, Major Benjamin, 239.
McIntosh, Colonel J. S., 122.
McKee, Colonel William R., 251, 276, 283.
McLaren, Surgeon Adam N., 70.
McLean, Justice John, 317.
McManus, Dr. Charles, 7.
McRee, Captain Samuel, 128.
Meade, Lieutenant George G., 155.
Mercer, Commander Samuel, 128.
Meredith, William M., 323.
Mesquez, Señor, 290.
Matamoros, occupation of, 131.
Mexican Cossacks, 102.
Mexican War, 104.
Miles, Captain Dixon S., 155.
Mitchell, Lieutenant - Colonel David D., 166.
Miñon, General D. José Vieinte, 239, 244, 268.
Monroe, Major John, 56, 90, 127, 176, 262, 278.
Monterey, battle of, 3, 149.
Montgomery, Lieut. Thomas J., 128.
Montgomery, Captain William R., 108, 122.
Morales, General, 174.
Morgan's spies, 62, 68.
Morris, Captain Charles F., 122.
Morris, Captain Lewis N., 108.
Morrison, Major, 31.
Muir, Major S. C., 31.

Najera, Colonel Juan, 159.
Nuevo Leon, state of, 149.
Noel, Captain Thomas, 63, 68.

O Brien, Captain J. P. J., 251, 278.
Okeechobee, battle of, 60.
Old Whitey, 147, 148.
Ortega, General D. José Maria, 179, 245, 258.
Osceola, 48.
Ou-la-too-gee, 70.

Pacheco, General D. Francisco, 244, 248, 258.
Page, Captain John, 110, 127.
Palo Alto, battle of, 3, 109.
Paredes, General D. Mariano, 203.
Parks, Captain (Indian), 57.
Parrodi, General D. Anastasio, 245.
Patterson, General Robert, 207, 216, 223, 235.
Payne, Colonel M. M., 122.
Perez, General Don Francisco, 270, 223.
Perry, Commodore Matthew C., 223.
Phillips, Wendell, 343.

Digitized by Google

Pierce, Hon. Franklin, 348, 355.
Pillow, General Gideon J., 207.
Pike, Captain Albert, 261, 278.
Point Isabel, 7, 105, 114.
Polk, Hon. James K., 82, 140, 195, 217, 303, 317, 377.
Polk, Mrs. James K., 323.
Pope, Lieutenant John, 158.
Porter, Captain Andrew, 96.
Porter, Lieutenant Theodoric Henry, 101.
Pottawattamies, The, 31.
Preston, William B., 323.
Price, Lieutenant-Colonel Sterling, 57.
Pyne, Rev. Dr. (of Washington), 376.

Quitman, General John A., 146, 166, 235.

Ramsay, Captain George D., 128.
Raquena, General D. Tomas, 130, 179.
Renshaw, Lieutenant Francis B., 128.
Resaca de la Palma, battle of, 3, 119.
Reynolds, Lieutenant John F., 263, 278.
Ridgely, Lieutenant Randolph, 110, 119, 168.
Ringgold, Major Samuel, 106, 111, 126.
Rio Grande, 3, 90, 133.
Ritchie, Lieutenant John I., 235.
Roane, Colonel John S., 251.
Robinson, Fayette, 83.
Rogers, Captain William P., 68, 255.
Roland, Lieutenant John F., 172.
Romero, General D. Manuel, 155, 159.
Rough and Ready, 124, 148.
Rucker, Lieutenant Daniel H., 261.
Rusk, Hon. Thomas J., 81.

Saltillo, capture of, 219.
Sanchez, General, 290.
Sanders, Captain John, 128, 155, 172.
San Juan River, 150.
Santa Anna, General A. L. de, 191, 211, 224, 234, 246, 274, 291.
Satterlee, Surgeon Richard S., 69.
Sconce, Major John, 68.
Scott, Captain J. M., 155, 165.
Scott, General Winfield, 15, 79, 142, 195, 217, 224, 312.
Screven, Captain Richard B., 155, 171.
Seldon, Lieutenant Joseph, 122.
Seward, Hon. William H., 326.
Sheridan, General Philip H., 260.
Sherman, Captain T. W., 43, 256, 278.
Sherman, General W. T., 186, 282.
Shields, General James, 207.
Shover, Captain William H., 255, 269, 278.
Sibley, Captain Eben S., 128.
Sierra Madre Mountains, 150.

Digitized by Google

Simpson, Surgeon Josiah, 70.
Smith, Colonel C. F., 57.
Smith, Captain Charles F., 119, 160.
Smith, Miss Margaret, 126.
Smith, General Persifor F., 155, 161.
Smith, Dr. (of Saltillo), 7.
"St. Patrick's" Company, 245.
Staniford, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas, 155, 159.
Stanley, Edward, 348, 355.
Steen, Captain Enoch, 240, 255, 278.
Stevens, Lieutenant George, 132.
Stewart, Hon. Andrew, 297.
Stockton, Commodore Robert F., 142.
Stone Eater, 37.
Strathfieldsaye, 148.
Strother, Mary, 17.

Tampa Bay, 65, 66.
Taney, Chief-Justice Roger Brooke, 317.
Taylor, Hancock, 18.
Taylor, Captain Joseph P., 69, 372.
Taylor, Mary, 18.
Taylor, Richard, 16.
Taylor, W. D. S., 25.
Taylor, Mrs. Zachary, 73, 299, 373.
Tecumseh, 27, 31.
Thomas, Major Charles, 128.
Thomas, Lieutenant George H., 263, 278.
Thompson, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander R., 63, 71.
Thornton, Captain Seth B., 102, 126.
Tompkins, Captain D. D., 53.
Torena, Miguel, 254.
Torrejon, General D. Anastasio, 102, 156, 244, 271.
Trail, Major Xerxes F., 256.
Tus-ta-nug-gee, 70.
Twiggs, General David E., 88, 106, 126, 157, 170, 235.
Tyler, Hon. John, 79.

Uncle Sam's men, 47.
United States, President of the, 85.
Upham, Dr. Francis W., 91, 348.

Van Buren, Hon. Martin, 51, 302, 312.
Van Swearingen, Captain Joseph, 71.
Victoria, Queen, 148.
Vinton, Captain John R., 172.
Von Moltke, Field Marshal, 3.

Walker, Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel H., 172.
Walker, Lieutenant William H. T., 68, 110.
Wapello, 46.
Warren, Major William B., 255.
Warren, General Joseph, 267.
Washington, General George, 4, 17, 140, 245, 308, 345, 367.
Washington, Captain J. M., 243, 251, 278.
Watson, Lieutenant-Colonel William H., 164.
Waterloo, Battle of, 148.

Digitized by Google

Wayne, General Anthony, 22.
Weathersford, Colonel William, 243.
Weatherspoon, Dr. Alexander S., 370.
Webster, Hon. Daniel, 302, 310, 312, 348, 360, 366, 377.
Webster, Captain Lucien B., 168, 255.
Wellington, Duke of, 109, 148, 260.
Westminster Abbey, 148.
Wheeler, Captain Erastus, 268.
White, Hon. Herman, 348, 351,
Whiting, Lieutenant Henry M., 278.
Wilkinson, General James, 26.
Williams, Captain William G.. 158.
Wilmot, Hon. David, 145, 304.
Wilson, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry, 129.
Wilson, General James Grant, 147.
Winnebagoes, the, 31.
Wood, Colonel George T., 157.
Wood, Lieutenant James S., 121.
Wood, Dr. Robert C., 370.
Woods, Lieutenant Samuel, 68.
Wool, General J. E., 196, 201, 217, 223, 232, 250, 276.
Worth, General William J., 95, 132, 146, 154, 179, 223.
Wright, General H. G., 260.

Yell, Colonel Archibald, 240, 251.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

COLONIAL COURT-HOUSE.
PHILADELPHIA, 1707.

"This work marks an epoch in the history-writing of this country."—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

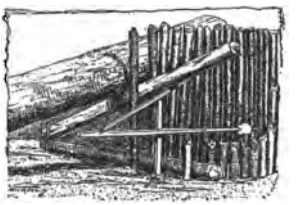
THE HOUSEHOLD HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS PEOPLE.

FOR YOUNG AMERICANS. By EDWARD EGGLESTON. Richly illustrated with 350 Drawings, 75 Maps, etc. Square 8vo. Cloth, $2.50.

FROM THE PREFACE.

The present work is meant, in the first instance, for the young—not alone for boys and girls, but for young men and women who have yet to make themselves familiar with the more important features of their country's history. By a book for the young is meant one in which the author studies to make his statements clear and explicit, in which curious and picturesque details are inserted, and in which the writer does not neglect such anecdotes as lend the charm of a human and personal interest to the broader facts of the nation's story. That history is often tiresome to the young is not so much the fault of history as of a false method of writing by which one contrives to relate events without sympathy or imagination, without narrative connection or animation. The attempt to master vague and general records of kiln-dried facts is certain to beget in the ordinary reader a repulsion from the study of history—one of the very most important of all studies for its widening influence on general culture.

"Fills a decided gap which has existed for the past twenty years in American historical literature. The work is admirably planned and executed, and will at once take its place as a standard record of the life, growth, and development of the nation. It is profusely and beautifully illustrated."—*Boston Transcript.*



INDIAN'S TRAP.

"The book in its new dress makes a much finer appearance than before, and will be welcomed by older readers as gladly as its predecessor was greeted by girls and boys. The lavish use the publishers have made of colored plates, woodcuts, and photographic reproductions, gives an unwonted piquancy to the printed page, catching the eye as surely as the text engages the mind."—*New York Critic.*

GENERAL PUTNAM.

"The author writes history as a story. It can never be less than that. The book will enlist the interest of young people, enlighten their understanding, and by the glow of its statements fix the great events of the country firmly in the mind."—*San Francisco Bulletin.*

Digitized by Google

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: The True Story of a Great LIFE. By WILLIAM H. HERNDON and JESSE W. WEIK. With numerous Illustrations. New and revised edition, with an Introduction by HORACE WHITE. In two volumes. 12mo. Cloth, $3.00.

This is probably the most intimate life of Lincoln ever written. The book, by Lincoln's law-partner, William H. Herndon, and his friend Jesse W. Weik, shows us Lincoln the man. It is a true picture of his surroundings and influences and acts. It is not an attempt to construct a political history, with Lincoln often in the background, nor is it an effort to apotheosize the American who stands first in our history next to Washington. The writers knew Lincoln intimately. Their book is the result of unreserved association. There is no attempt to portray the man as other than he really was, and on this account their frank testimony must be accepted, and their biography must take permanent rank as the best and most illuminating study of Lincoln's character and personality. Their story, simply told, relieved by characteristic anecdotes, and vivid with local color, will be found a fascinating work.

"Truly, they who wish to know Lincoln as he really was must read the biography of him written by his friend and law-partner, W. H. Herndon. This book was imperatively needed to brush aside the rank growth of myth and legend which was threatening to hide the real lineaments of Lincoln from the eyes of posterity. On one pretext or another, but usually upon the plea that he was the central figure of a great historical picture, most of his self-appointed biographers have, by suppressing a part of the truth and magnifying or embellishing the rest, produced portraits which those of Lincoln's contemporaries who knew him best are scarcely able to recognize. There is, on the other hand, no doubt about the faithfulness of Mr. Herndon's delineation. The marks of unflinching veracity are patent in every line."—*New York Sun.*

"Among the books which ought most emphatically to have been written must be classed 'Herndon's Lincoln.'"—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

"The author has his own notion of what a biography should be, and it is simple enough. The story should tell all, plainly and even bluntly. Mr. Herndon is naturally a very direct writer, and he has been industrious in gathering material. Whether an incident happened before or behind the scenes, is all the same to him. He gives it without artifice or apology. He describes the life of his friend Lincoln just as he saw it."—*Cincinnati Commercial Gazette.*

"One of the most curious and engrossing works that has been brought out in many years."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

ADMIRAL FARRAGUT. By Captain A. T. MAHAN, U.S.N., author of "The Gulf and Inland Waters," etc. With Portrait and Maps. 12mo. Cloth, $1.25.

This is the first book in "The Great Commander Series," edited by Gen. James Grant Wilson, representing an effort to satisfy a popular demand for a series of convenient, readable, popular, but authoritative biographies of illustrious American leaders on land and sea. The second volume will be "General Taylor," by General O. O. Howard, U.S.A. Other volumes will follow shortly. Each will present a steel-plate portrait of the subject as a frontispiece, and will contain several maps.

New York: D. APPLETON & CO., 1, 3, & 5 Bond Street.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google